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IRVING'S TALES OF A TRAVELER

RUTLAND

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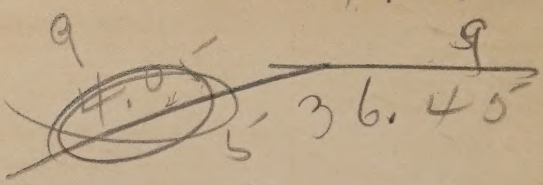
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ECLECTIC ENGLISH CLASSICS

Addison's Sir Roger de Coverley (Underwood)

Arnold's Sohrab and Rustum (Tanner)

Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress (Jones and Arnold)

Burke's Conciliation with America (Clark)
Speeches at Bristol (Bergin)

Burns's Poems—Selections (Venable)

Byron's Childe Harold (Canto IV), Prisoner of Chillon, Mazeppa, and other Selections (Venable)

Carlyle's Essay on Burns (Miller)

Chaucer's Prologue and Knighte's Tale (Van Dyke)

Coleridge's Ancient Mariner (Garrigues)

Cooper's Pilot (Watrous)
The Spy (Barnes)

Defoe's History of the Plague in London (Syle)
Robinson Crusoe (Stephens)

De Quincey's Revolt of the Tartars

Dickens's Christmas Carol and Cricket on the Hearth (Wannamaker)
Tale of Two Cities (Pearce)

Dryden's Palamon and Arcite (Bates)

Eliot's Silas Marner (McKitrick)

Emerson's American Scholar, Self-Reliance, Compensation (Smith)

Franklin's Autobiography (Reid)

Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield (Hansen)

Gray's Elegy in a Country Churchyard, and **Goldsmith's** Deserted Village (Van Dyke)

Hughes's Tom Brown's School Days (Gosling).

Irving's Sketch Book—Selections (St. John)
Tales of a Traveler (Rutland)

Lincoln's Addresses and Letters (Moores)
Address at Cooper Union; and **Macaulay's** Speeches on Copyright (Pittenger)

Macaulay's Essay on Addison (Matthews)
Essay on Milton (Mead)
Essays on Lord Clive and Warren Hastings (Holmes)

Macaulay's Lays of Ancient Rome and other Poems (Atkinson)
Life of Johnson (Lucas)
Speeches on Copyright; and **Lincoln's** Address at Cooper Union (Pittenger)

Milton's L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, Comus, Lycidas (Buck)
Paradise Lost. Books I and II (Stephens)

Old Ballads (Morton)

Old Testament Narratives (Baldwin)

Poe's Selected Poems and Tales (Stott)

Pope's Homer's Iliad. Books I, VI, XXII, XXIV
Rape of the Lock, and Essay on Man (Van Dyke)

Ruskin's Sesame and Lilies (Rounds)

Scott's Abbot
Ivanhoe (Schreiber)
Lady of the Lake (Bacon)
Marmion (Coblentz)
Quentin Durward (Norris)
Woodstock

Shakespeare's As You Like It (North)
Hamlet (Shower)
Henry V (Law)
Julius Cæsar (Baker)
Macbeth (Livengood)
Merchant of Venice (Blakely)
Midsummer Night's Dream (Haney)
The Tempest (Barley)
Twelfth Night (Weld)

Southey's Life of Nelson

Stevenson's Inland Voyage, and Travels with a Donkey (Armstrong)
Treasure Island (Fairley)

Swift's Gulliver's Travels (Gaston)

Tennyson's Idylls of the King. Selections (Willard)
Princess (Shryock)

Thackeray's Henry Esmond (Bissell)

Washington's Farewell Address, and **Webster's** First Bunker Hill Oration (Lewis)

Webster's Bunker Hill Orations

Wordsworth's Poems—Selections (Venable)

Washington Irving.

ECLECTIC ENGLISH CLASSICS

IRVING'S

TALES OF A TRAVELER

EDITED BY

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INTRODUCTION.

WASHINGTON IRVING.

We love Washington Irving because of his delightful personality. As the first American writer who won the admiration of Europe, we are bound to feel proud of him. But those of us who have rubbed elbows with Rip Van Winkle and who have been hand in glove with Ichabod Crane, feel a closer bond. As was the man, so was the writer, warm-hearted, unassuming, full of wit and good humor, characterized by elegant manners and noble sentiment. His intense love of social life was more than gratified by his extensive travels, for everywhere he went he found troops of loyal friends. Even unsocial Carlyle was grieved at the news of his death, saying, "It was a dream of mine that we two should be friends." Fanny Kemble, the great actress, whom he liked to see on the stage, said, "He is so sensible, sound, and straightforward in his ways of seeing everything and at the same time so full of hopefulness, so simple, unaffected, true, and good, that it is a privilege to converse with him, for which one is the wiser, the happier, and the better." Such was his popularity, that when he felt that he must write, he was compelled to hide himself in some secluded nook where he could be found only by his closest friends. He was so retiring and shy that he broke down in the only after-dinner speech he ever tried; and when he first met Mrs. Siddons, who complimented his sketches by saying, "You have made me weep," he, who was usually readiest with social wit, raillery,

and repartee, was so disconcerted that he said nothing and beat a hasty retreat.

The compliment of Mrs. Siddons was happy, for, though his inimitable humor, glowing in every turn of phrase, abounds in jollity and health, many of his sketches are pervaded by the tenderest pathos. His deep, chivalrous regard for women raised the sex in his estimation far above the ordinary level of human beings and his relations with them conformed laudably to his high conceptions. In fact, he was so genial, modest, happy in good nature, noble in thought, that all who have learned to know him can say, as Dickens said, "I have been so accustomed to associate you with my pleasantest and happiest thoughts that I rush at once into full confidence with you."

Irving was born on April 3, 1783, the year England acknowledged American independence and evacuated New York. The child inherited the disposition of his mother, who was an Englishwoman of charming personality, full of life, geniality, sympathy, rather than that of his father, who was a Scotchman, with his native piety, ideals of strict discipline, and homely common sense. From the first he was a spirited, fun-loving lad, a true child of the fond, loyal-hearted woman, who in a moment of patriotic ardor named him after the "Father of his Country." He started to school at the early age of seven and continued somewhat irregularly, on account of his delicate health, till he was fifteen. He was fond of boyish pranks at school and at home; and was called "General" by one of his teachers because, when brought to trial, he never told a lie to escape punishment. He tells how he clambered out of a garret window at home over dizzy heights of roof for the pleasant thrill of dropping a stone down a neighbor's chimney and scurrying

back to his hiding place, and how his schoolmaster occasionally glided up behind him when he was absorbed in a forbidden story and snatched the book away. Inordinately fond of "Robinson Crusoe," "Sinbad the Sailor," "The World Displayed," and other books of travel and romance, he often secretly braved the rebuke of his father, who feared he would get too much pleasure out of life, and punishment by his teacher, who demanded arduous routine tasks. With his head full of fancies and with a joyous interest in wave, wind, and field, he explored every nook and corner about New York, was familiar with every trout brook and hunting ground in its vicinity, and wandered ceaselessly along the coast looking out across the sea for lands he had read about and longed to look upon.

Once having decided to be a sailor, he reluctantly gave up the idea because, after attempting to sleep upon a hard floor and eat salt pork, he found that the severe training was too much for his delicate health. He liked the drama, too, and in order to enjoy the forbidden sweet, he would slip away after supper to the theater, hurry home to family prayers as soon as the first act was over, and retire piously to his room to slide out of the window and rush to see the rest of the play. His mother, who thoroughly sympathized with the mischievous, fun-loving boy, would sometimes say after some such escapade, "Oh! Washington, if you were only good!"

He had been so careless a student that, instead of going to college as his brothers had done, he chose to go into a law office. As was shown later, he had no special fitness for law and never had much more than a passing interest in it. However, he had not chosen a vocation and must be doing something to please his family; for he seemed, like Stevenson in his early days, to

be shiftlessly idling away his time. Having taken up in 1799 the study of law, he gave to it such time as was left from literature, rambling in and out of New York, and the gayeties of society. He had already spent a summer hunting in the Sleepy Hollow regions, and, in 1800, he made his first voyage up the Hudson to visit a married sister, indulging his roving instinct and gathering impressions which he later used in the "Sketch-Book." He soon gave the rein to another instinct, his literary impulse. In 1802, he contributed to his brother's paper several essays, "audacious satires of the theaters, the actors and their audience," which foreshadowed his quiet humor, sensitive nature, and chivalrous opinion of woman. It was about this time that he fell in love with Matilda Hoffman. Irving was never in robust health, and now, as he began to show signs of pulmonary trouble, he spent much time in voyaging up the Hudson and enjoying the gay society of many towns, going as far as Montreal and Quebec. When he became of age in 1804, he was so frail that his brothers sent him to travel in Europe, where he stayed two years. On his return, he was admitted to the bar, but had very little law and very few clients.

His love of society, his interest in men and women, his zest for experiences of every kind seemed to preclude all idea of more serious business. On his European trip, which was an outing for his health, he had visited Paris, Rome, Sicily, Rotterdam, London, and other cities, and had had many interesting experiences. In one place he and his companions, among whom was a French officer, amused themselves by pretending to a crowd of young women at a quilting party that he was a prisoner in custody of the officer and would likely lose his life. He was so happy, so courteous, so gifted in social charms, that they were greatly

grieved at his supposed fate, and showed him the greatest courtesy, giving him wine, filling his pockets with cake and fruits, and sending him away with their sincerest womanly sympathies. This harmless deception was all the more thrilling because in France he was suspected of being an English spy and his footsteps were everywhere dogged by the police. On the way to Sicily, he had the exquisite experience of being captured by a pirate ship, whose crew in slouchy dress, with fierce mustaches, cutlasses, and pistols, took and gave receipt for all they wanted on board. Abroad he found many friends for his charming manners, gentle chivalry, and sunny nature made him welcome wherever he went. It is interesting to note that his acquaintance with his fellow-countryman, Allston, in Italy inspired him to become a painter.

When he came back to New York, he plunged into social life with great zest. He was the "champion of tea parties," carried on numerous flirtations, and was the leading member of the "Nine Worthies," a club of gay, effervescent youths, who had jolly suppers and disorderly revelries in Cockloft Hall and wished to be thought quite wild. Still one may believe that in passing in and out among men and women he consciously gathered impressions, thoughts, and sentiments which he intended for future use; for his club life brought forth a series of humorous and satirical essays in which the purpose was, as whimsically stated, "to instruct the young, reform the old, correct the town, and castigate the age." In the following year, 1808, he and his brother Peter began the "Knickerbocker History of New York," as a burlesque on a handbook of the city that had just been published; but, as Peter was obliged to sail for Europe, it was left to Washington to finish and expand it into a different con-

ception. In the midst of his work he was greatly grieved by the death of Matilda Hoffman, whom he was to have married. It is said that her name was never afterward mentioned in his presence without casting gloom over his spirits. "When I became once more calm and collected," he writes, "I applied myself by way of occupation to the finishing of my work." It was published in 1809 and, while some of his readers resented the humorous portraiture of their revered ancestors, the work was recognized in America and in England as the work of a genius. Scott enjoyed it so hugely that he read it aloud to his family. Yet with the exception that Irving contributed occasional articles to the "Analectic Magazine," he published nothing for the next ten years. In 1810 he went into the hardware business with his brothers, and went to England again in 1815. After the habit of young lawyers with few fees, he dabbled in politics a little but was disgusted. He even took little interest in the War of 1812, till his indignation fired up at the burning of the public buildings in Washington. He then enlisted but saw no actual service. At the close of the war, he turned again reluctantly to the hardware business, for the time of sufficient confidence in his literary powers had not yet come.

However, his decision to concentrate his powers on literary work, did come in 1818. Some time before this, he had begun the sketches which were later to appear in the "Sketch-Book"; but the business required too much of his time and became more trying and distasteful when his brother Peter fell ill in 1815, leaving to him the cares of the firm in England. Finally, after many months of rather doubtful success, the company failed and the would-be author was cast on his own resources. His former hesitation about entering the literary life, due partly

to the uncertain income of a writer, but mostly to his modest opinion of his powers, was now all gone. He refused a clerkship in the Navy Department at Washington, and courteously declined the editorship of an English magazine offered him by Scott. The "Sketch-Book" was published in America in 1818 and in England in 1820. The almost universal approval and the extensive sale assured his success. Byron liked it so well that he nearly learned it by heart and the reviewers on both sides of the Atlantic were unanimous in their praise. Still the modest author wrote to a friend, "I hope I may yet do something more worthy of the appreciation lavished on me." "Bracebridge Hall," another collection of sketches and stories, came out in 1822 and "Tales of a Traveler," which in his opinion contained some of his best work, appeared two years later. He remained in London five years after the publication of the "Sketch-Book," where all "that was best in the society of letters and fashion was open to him." In Dresden and Paris he was received with open arms. In Dresden, it is said, he fell in love; in Paris he met Tom Moore and wrote much of the "Tales of a Traveler." In the intervals left from his work and an intermittent constitutional illness, his love for fashionable society, delight in the theater, and passion for traveling were indulged. Society always delighted him.

Notwithstanding the chorus of praise from reviewers, men of letters, the great and noble everywhere, publishers, and the great throng of readers, Irving was not satisfied. He felt that he must do something more serious, for apparently he regarded the sketches as mere off-shoots of a playful mood, intermittent spurts of fanciful invention, and not to be considered permanently valuable. So he went to Spain in 1826 to translate a

new history of the voyages of Columbus. But he changed his mind and wrote a "Life of Columbus" (1828), the first product of his most fruitful period. There followed during the first ten years of Spanish interest, the "Conquest of Granada" (1829), "Companions of Columbus" (1831), "Alhambra" (1832), and "The Legend of the Conquest of Spain" (1835). Charles Dudley Warner says, "Irving had the creative touch or at least the magic of pen to give a definite, universal romantic interest to whatever he described." It was his romantic touch that opened up, for Americans at least, the picturesque, captivating, dream-inspiring splendors and ruins of Alhambra and Saracen Spain. While his histories are criticized by matter-of-fact historians for their diffuseness and rhetorical color, they are substantially correct and gave to later historians a hint of the value of "vivid individual portraiture in historical narrative." Indefatigable worker though he was, the witty, warm-hearted devotee of society found much time for festivity and was received with the greatest kindness into the court circles. He was especially intimate with Prince Dolgoruki and the family of the Russian minister. Unexpectedly in 1829, while in the midst of numerous literary plans, he received the appointment as secretary of the American legation in London, and, after some delay, accepted it. London extended a welcoming hand. This time the King, through the Royal Society of Literature, awarded him a medal as an honored historian; Oxford invested him with the degree of LL. D. He had now begun to do the kind of serious work which he had thought necessary to establish his literary worth.

Two years after his departure from Spain, he returned to America to be overwhelmed by a most enthusiastic welcome. After the ordeal of a public banquet in New York, his shrink-

ing modesty forced him to decline the same tribute from many other cities. "America greeted her most famous literary man," says a biographer, "with a spontaneous outburst of love and admiration." He writes to his brother in England, "Wherever I go, I am received with cordiality, I may say an affection that keeps my heart full and running over." Very soon he went on a tour in the West with a party of commissioners sent to treat with the Indians. He declined a nomination for Congress, the Tammany nomination for Mayor of New York, and an offer of the secretaryship of the navy. Formerly he had found his inspiration in Europe; now America stirred him to new plans and new activities. "Astoria," "Tour of the Prairies," "Adventures of Captain Bonneville," and other sketches and essays followed in quick succession. His affections, however, were more deeply engaged in his family and the little cottage he had prepared at Tarrytown. Here, surrounded by family and friends, working at a few favorite literary projects and making only an occasional excursion to gratify his love of travel and a fondness for social life in a city, he hoped to spend the rest of his days in peace and happiness.

He was surprised, therefore, when in 1842 he was appointed minister to Spain. It was a hard struggle to tear himself from home and his work, but as the appointment came as a well-meant honor from the people he loved above all peoples, and as he was extraordinarily equipped for this delicate position, he felt it his duty to accept. As he pondered for and against, pacing up and down the floor excitedly, he was heard to say: "It is hard, very hard, yet I must try to bear it. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." Spain was then in a state of constant excitement. The young queen, whose throne was by no means

secure, was not yet fourteen years of age; and just a few days before Irving presented his credentials, an armed force had nearly succeeded in taking the palace and carrying off the little queen and her sister. Change of ministers was so frequent that Irving wrote to Webster, "To carry on a negotiation with such transient functionaries is like bargaining at the window of a railroad car: before you can get a reply to a proposition, the other party is out of sight." Irving performed his duties with credit to himself and honor to his country, doing much to strengthen the amicable relations existing between the United States and Spain. After nearly four years had expired, he wrote: "I long to be once more back at dear little Sunnyside, while I have yet strength and good spirits to enjoy the simple pleasures of the country, and to rally a happy family group once more about me." Next year found him at home, where he was to enjoy thirteen more years of happy life.

He now resumed his literary activities. A new edition of his works was begun in 1848 and by 1850 over 250,000 volumes had been sold. He had already generously given up to Prescott, the historian, a pet project of many years, to write a history of Mexico; but he turned again to his "Life of Washington," finishing it just a few months before his death. He died on Nov. 28, 1859, in his home at Sunnyside, surrounded by loving nephews and nieces. Pierre M. Irving, his first biographer, says, "His departure was sudden; but so he was willing it should be. In the fullness of years, with unclouded intellect, crowned with the warmest affections of his countrymen, and with the assured hope of a happy immortality, he had gone down, according to his own pathetic inspiration, 'with all sail set.'"

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PART I.

STRANGE STORIES

BY

A NERVOUS GENTLEMAN.

I'll tell you more: there was a fish taken,
A monstrous fish, with a sword by 's side, a long sword,
A pike in 's neck, and a gun in 's nose, a huge gun,
And letters of mart in 's mouth from the Duke of Florence.
Cleanthes. This is a monstrous lie.
Tony. I do confess it.
Do you think I'd tell you truths?

FLETCHER'S *Wife for a Month.*

TO THE READER.

WORTHY AND DEAR READER! — Hast thou ever been waylaid in the midst of a pleasant tour by some treacherous malady? thy heels tripped up, and thou left to count the tedious minutes as they passed, in the solitude of an inn chamber? If thou hast, thou wilt be able to pity me. Behold me, interrupted in the course of my journeying up the fair banks of the Rhine, and laid up by indisposition in this old frontier town of Mentz.[1] I have worn out every source of amusement. I know the sound of every clock that strikes, and bell that rings, in the place. I know to a second when to listen for the first tap of the Prussian drum, as it summons the garrison to parade, or at what hour to expect the distant sound of the Austrian military band. All these have grown wearisome to me; and even the well-known step of my doctor, as he slowly paces the corridor, with healing in the creak of his shoes, no longer affords an agreeable interruption to the monotony of my apartment.

For a time I attempted to beguile the weary hours by studying German under the tuition of mine host's pretty little daughter, Katrine; but I soon found even German had not power to charm a languid ear, and that the conjugating of *ich liebe*[2] might be powerless, however rosy the lips which uttered it.

I tried to read, but my mind would not fix itself. I turned over volume after volume, but threw them by with distaste. "Well, then," said I at length, in despair, "if I cannot read a book, I will write one." Never was there a more lucky idea; it

[1] A city of Germany, the capital of Rhenish Hesse, situated on the left bank of the Rhine. It is a fortress, and has a garrison of eight hundred men.

[2] German for "I love."

at once gave me occupation and amusement. The writing of a book was considered in old times as an enterprise of toil and difficulty, insomuch that the most trifling lucubration was denominated a "work," and the world talked with awe and reverence of "the labors of the learned." These matters are better understood nowadays.

Thanks to the improvements in all kinds of manufactures, the art of bookmaking has been made familiar to the meanest capacity. Everybody is an author. The scribbling of a quarto is the mere pastime of the idle; the young gentleman throws off his brace of duodecimos in the intervals of the sporting season, and the young lady produces her set of volumes with the same facility that her great-grandmother worked a set of chair bottoms.

The idea having struck me, therefore, to write a book, the reader will easily perceive that the execution of it was no difficult matter. I rummaged my portfolio, and cast about in my recollection for those floating materials which a man naturally collects in traveling; and here I have arranged them in this little work.

As I know this to be a story-telling and a story-reading age, and that the world is fond of being taught by apologue, I have digested[1] the instruction I would convey into a number of tales. They may not possess the power of amusement which the tales told by many of my contemporaries possess; but then I value myself on the sound moral which each of them contains. This may not be apparent at first, but the reader will be sure to find it out in the end. I am for[2] curing the world by gentle alteratives, not by violent doses; indeed, the patient should never be conscious that he is taking a dose. I have learnt this much from experience under the hands of the worthy Hippocrates[3] of Mentz.

I am not, therefore, for those barefaced tales which carry their

[1] Distributed. [2] "I am for," i.e., I am in favor of.

[3] A Greek physician (468–367 B.C.), called the "Father of Medicine;" hence, the doctor.

moral on the surface, staring one in the face; they are enough to deter the squeamish reader. On the contrary, I have often hid my moral from sight, and disguised it as much as possible by sweets and spices, so that while the simple reader is listening with open mouth to a ghost or a love story, he may have a bolus [1] of sound morality popped down his throat, and be never the wiser for the fraud.

As the public is apt to be curious about the sources whence an author draws his stories, doubtless that it may know how far to put faith in them, I would observe that the "Adventure of the German Student," or rather the latter part of it, is founded on an anecdote related to me as existing somewhere in French; and, indeed, I have been told, since writing it, that an ingenious tale has been founded on it by an English writer; but I have never met with either the former or the latter in print. Some of the circumstances in the "Adventure of the Mysterious Picture," and in "The Story of the Young Italian," are vague recollections of anecdotes related to me some years since; but from what source derived, I do not know. The adventure of the young painter among the banditti is taken almost entirely from an authentic narrative in manuscript.

As to the other tales contained in this work, and indeed to my tales generally, I can make but one observation: I am an old traveler, I have read somewhat, heard and seen more, and dreamt more than all. My brain is filled, therefore, with all kinds of odds and ends. In traveling, these heterogeneous matters have become shaken up in my mind, as the articles are apt to be in an ill-packed traveling trunk; so that when I attempt to draw forth a fact, I cannot determine whether I have read, heard, or dreamt it; and I am always at a loss to know how much to believe of my own stories.

These matters being premised, fall to,[2] worthy reader, with good appetite, and, above all, with good humor, to what is here set before thee. If the tales I have furnished should prove to

[1] A large pill.

[2] "Fall to," i.e., begin.

be bad, they will at least be found short; so that no one will be wearied long on the same theme. "Variety is charming," as some poet observes.

There is a certain relief in change, even though it be from bad to worse! As I have often found in traveling in a stagecoach, that it is often a comfort to shift one's position, and be bruised in a new place.

Ever thine,
GEOFFREY CRAYON.[1]

Dated from the HOTEL DE DARMSTADT,
ci-divant[2] HOTEL DE PARIS,
MENTZ, *otherwise called* MAYENCE.

THE GREAT UNKNOWN.

THE following adventures were related to me by the same nervous gentleman who told me the romantic tale of "The Stout Gentleman,"[3] published in "Bracebridge Hall." It is very singular that, although I expressly stated that story to have been told to me, and described the very person who told it, still it has been received as an adventure that happened to myself. Now I protest I never met with any adventure of the kind. I should not have grieved at this, had it not been intimated by the author of "Waverley," in an introduction to his novel of "Peveril of the Peak," that he was himself the stout gentleman alluded to. I have ever since been importuned by questions and letters from

[1] Washington Irving's pen name. [2] Formerly.

[3] The Stout Gentleman is the name of one of Irving's most humorous sketches. The nervous gentleman above referred to amuses himself on a rainy Sunday in a country inn by conjectures as to the personality and character of an unknown "stout gentleman," who remains during the day shut up in a room in the inn. After greatly arousing the curiosity of the reader, the nervous gentleman manages just to get a glimpse of the rear of a person getting into a stagecoach, which was all he ever saw of the stout gentleman.

gentlemen, and particularly from ladies without number, touching what I had seen of the "Great Unknown."[1]

Now all this is extremely tantalizing. It is like being congratulated on the high prize when one has drawn a blank;[2] for I have just as great a desire as any one of the public to penetrate the mystery of that very singular personage, whose voice fills every corner of the world, without any one being able to tell whence it comes.

My friend the nervous gentleman, also, who is a man of very shy, retired habits, complains that he has been excessively annoyed in consequence of its getting about in his neighborhood that he is the fortunate personage; insomuch, that he has become a character of considerable notoriety in two or three country towns, and has been repeatedly teased to exhibit himself at bluestocking[3] parties, for no other reason than that of being "the gentleman who has had a glimpse of the author of 'Waverley.'"

Indeed, the poor man has grown ten times as nervous as ever since he has discovered, on such good authority, who the stout gentleman was; and will never forgive himself for not having made a more resolute effort to get a full sight of him. He has anxiously endeavored to call up a recollection of what he saw of that portly personage; and has ever since kept a curious eye on all gentlemen of more than ordinary dimensions, whom he has seen getting into stagecoaches. All in vain! The features he had caught a glimpse of seem common to the whole race of stout gentlemen, and the "Great Unknown" remains as great an unknown as ever.

[1] Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832), Scottish novelist and poet, author of the Waverley Novels. Some of Scott's novels were published anonymously, and their author was called the "Great Unknown."

[2] A ticket in a lottery, on which no prize is indicated.

[3] A term applied to literary ladies. The name is derived from Mr. Stillingfleet, who was an indispensable attendant at certain meetings held in the eighteenth century by English ladies, for conversation with literary men, and who always wore blue stockings. Hence the names "bluestocking clubs" and "bluestockings."

Having premised these circumstances, I will now let the nervous gentleman proceed with his stories.

THE HUNTING DINNER.

I WAS once at a hunting dinner, given by a worthy fox-hunting old Baronet, who kept bachelor's hall in jovial style in an ancient, rook-haunted family mansion, in one of the middle counties. He had been a devoted admirer of the fair sex in his younger days; but, having traveled much, studied the sex in various countries with distinguished success, and returned home profoundly instructed, as he supposed, in the ways of woman, and a perfect master of the art of pleasing, he had the mortification of being jilted by a little boarding-school girl, who was scarcely versed in the accidence[1] of love.

The Baronet was completely overcome by such an incredible defeat; retired from the world in disgust; put himself under the government of his housekeeper; and took to fox hunting like a perfect Nimrod.[2] Whatever poets may say to the contrary, a man will grow out of love as he grows old; and a pack of fox hounds may chase out of his heart even the memory of a boarding-school goddess. The Baronet was, when I saw him, as merry and mellow an old bachelor as ever followed a hound; and the love he had once felt for one woman had spread itself over the whole sex, so that there was not a pretty face in the whole country round but came in for a share.

The dinner was prolonged till a late hour; for our host having no ladies in his household to summon us to the drawing-room, the bottle maintained its true bachelor sway, unrivaled by its potent enemy, the teakettle. The old hall in which we dined

[1] Conjugation.

[2] "A mighty hunter before the Lord" (see Gen. x. 8–12). The traditional notion of his character connects with it ideas of violence and insolence.

echoed to bursts of robustious[1] fox-hunting merriment, that made the ancient antlers shake on the walls. By degrees, however, the wine and the wassail of mine host began to operate upon bodies already a little jaded by the chase. The choice spirits which flashed up at the beginning of the dinner sparkled for a time, then gradually went out one after another, or only emitted now and then a faint gleam from the socket. Some of the briskest talkers, who had given tongue so bravely at the first burst,[2] fell fast asleep; and none kept on their way but certain of those long-winded prosers, who, like short-legged hounds, worry on unnoticed at the bottom[3] of conversation, but are sure to be in at the death.[4] Even these at length subsided into silence; and scarcely anything was heard but the nasal communications of two or three veteran masticators, who, having been silent while awake, were indemnifying the company in their sleep.

At length the announcement of tea and coffee in the cedar parlor roused all hands from this temporary torpor. Every one awoke marvelously renovated, and while sipping the refreshing beverage out of the Baronet's old-fashioned hereditary china, began to think of departing for their several homes. But here a sudden difficulty arose. While we had been prolonging our repast, a heavy winter storm had set in, with snow, rain, and sleet, driven by such bitter blasts of wind that they threatened to penetrate to the very bone.

"It's all in vain," said our hospitable host, "to think of putting one's head out of doors in such weather. So, gentlemen, I hold you my guests for this night at least, and will have your quarters prepared accordingly."

The unruly weather, which became more and more tempestu-

[1] Hearty.

[2] "Had given tongue," etc., i.e., had talked so well in the beginning.

[3] Beginning.

[4] "In at the death," a term used in fox hunting, meaning to come up with the game before it has been killed by the hounds; hence, to be present at the end of anything.

ous, rendered the hospitable suggestion unanswerable. The only question was whether such an unexpected accession of company to an already crowded house would not put the housekeeper to her trumps [1] to accommodate them.

"Pshaw!" cried mine host; "did you ever know a bachelor's hall that was not elastic, and able to accommodate twice as many as it could hold?"

So, out of a good-humored pique, the housekeeper was summoned to a consultation before us all. The old lady appeared in her gala suit of faded brocade, which rustled with flurry and agitation; for, in spite of our host's bravado, she was a little perplexed. But in a bachelor's house, and with bachelor guests, these matters are readily managed. There is no lady of the house to stand upon squeamish points about lodging gentlemen in odd holes and corners, and exposing the shabby parts of the establishment. A bachelor's housekeeper is used to shifts and emergencies; so, after much worrying to and fro, and divers consultations about the red room, and the blue room, and the chintz room, and the damask room, and the little room with the bow window, the matter was finally arranged.

When all this was done, we were once more summoned to the standing rural amusement of eating. The time that had been consumed in dozing after dinner, and in the refreshment and consultation of the cedar parlor, was sufficient, in the opinion of the rosy-faced butler, to engender a reasonable appetite for supper. A slight repast had therefore been tricked [2] up from the residue of dinner, consisting of a cold sirloin of beef, hashed venison, a deviled leg of a turkey or so, and a few other of those light articles taken by country gentlemen to insure sound sleep and heavy snoring.

The nap after dinner had brightened up every one's wit; and a great deal of excellent humor was expended upon the perplexities of mine host and his housekeeper, by certain married gentlemen of the company, who considered themselves privileged in

[1] "Put to her trumps," i.e., test all her ingenuity. [2] Served.

joking with a bachelor's establishment. From this the banter turned as to what quarters each would find, on being thus suddenly billeted in so antiquated a mansion.

"By my soul," said an Irish captain of dragoons, one of the most merry and boisterous of the party, "by my soul, but I should not be surprised if some of those good-looking gentlefolks that hang along the walls should walk about the rooms of this stormy night; or if I should find the ghost of one of those long-waisted ladies turning into my bed in mistake for her grave in the churchyard."

"Do you believe in ghosts, then?" said a thin, hatchet-faced[1] gentleman, with projecting eyes like a lobster.

I had remarked this last personage during dinner time for one of those incessant questioners, who have a craving, unhealthy appetite in conversation. He never seemed satisfied with the whole of a story; never laughed when others laughed; but always put the joke to the question. He never could enjoy the kernel of the nut, but pestered himself to get more out of the shell. "Do you believe in ghosts, then?" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"Faith, but I do," replied the jovial Irishman. "I was brought up in the fear and belief of them. We had a Benshee in our own family, honey."

"A Benshee—and what's that?" cried the questioner.

"Why, an old lady ghost that tends upon your real Milesian[2] families, and waits at their window to let them know when some of them are to die."

"A mighty pleasant piece of information!" cried an elderly gentleman with a knowing look, and with a flexible nose to which he could give a whimsical twist when he wished to be waggish.

"By my soul, but I'd have you to know it's a piece of distinction to be waited on by a Benshee. It's a proof that one has pure blood in one's veins. But i' faith, now we are talking of

[1] With a face like the edge of a hatchet; hence, sharp-faced.

[2] Irish.

ghosts, there never was a house or a night better fitted than the present for a ghost adventure. Pray, Sir John, haven't you such a thing as a haunted chamber to put a guest in?"

"Perhaps," said the Baronet, smiling, "I might accommodate you even on that point."

"Oh, I should like it of all things, my jewel.[1] Some dark oaken room, with ugly, woe-begone portraits, that stare dismally at one, and about which the housekeeper has a power of[2] delightful stories of love and murder. And then a dim lamp, a table with a rusty sword across it, and a specter all in white, to draw aside one's curtains at midnight"—

"In truth," said an old gentleman at one end of the table, "you put me in mind of an anecdote"—

"Oh, a ghost story! a ghost story!" was vociferated round the board, every one edging his chair a little nearer.

The attention of the whole company was now turned upon the speaker. He was an old gentleman, one side of whose face was no match for the other. The eyelid drooped and hung down like an unhinged window shutter; indeed, the whole side of his head was dilapidated, and seemed like the wing of a house shut up and haunted. I'll warrant that side was well stuffed with ghost stories.

There was a universal demand for the tale.

"Nay," said the old gentleman, "it's a mere anecdote, and a very commonplace one; but such as it is you shall have it. It is a story that I once heard my uncle tell as having happened to himself. He was a man very apt to meet with strange adventures. I have heard him tell of others much more singular."

"What kind of a man was your uncle?" said the questioning gentleman.

"Why, he was rather a dry, shrewd kind of body; a great traveler, and fond of telling his adventures."

"Pray, how old might he have been when that happened?"

[1] A term of endearment.

[2] "A power of," i.e., a great number of.

"When what happened?" cried the gentleman with the flexible nose, impatiently. "Egad, you have not given anything a chance to happen. Come, never mind our uncle's age; let us have his adventures."

The inquisitive gentleman being for the moment silenced, the old gentleman with the haunted head proceeded.

THE ADVENTURE OF MY UNCLE.

MANY years since, some time before the French Revolution,[1] my uncle passed several months at Paris. The English and French were on better terms in those days than at present, and mingled cordially in society. The English went abroad to spend money then, and the French were always ready to help them. They go abroad to save money at present, and that they can do without French assistance. Perhaps the traveling English were fewer and choicer than at present, when the whole nation has broke[2] loose and inundated the continent. At any rate, they circulated more readily and currently in foreign society, and my uncle, during his residence in Paris, made many very intimate acquaintances among the French noblesse.[3]

Some time afterwards, he was making a journey in the winter time in that part of Normandy called the Pays de Caux, when, as evening was closing in, he perceived the turrets of an ancient chateau rising out of the trees of its walled park; each turret with its high, conical roof of gray slate, like a candle with an extinguisher on it.

[1] The great French Revolution (1789–94), a tremendous upheaval of society, caused by the revolt of the people against the abuses of the higher classes, and the despotism of the king. It resulted in the establishment of a democratic republic, followed by an empire resting on military power.

[2] Old form of "broken."

[3] Persons of noble rank.

"To whom does that chateau belong, friend?" cried my uncle to a meager but fiery postilion, who, with tremendous jack boots and cocked hat, was floundering on before him.

"To Monseigneur[1] the Marquis de ——," said the postilion, touching his hat, partly out of respect to my uncle, and partly out of reverence to the noble name pronounced.

My uncle recollected the Marquis for a particular friend in Paris, who had often expressed a wish to see him at his paternal chateau. My uncle was an old traveler, one who knew well how to turn things to account. He revolved for a few moments in his mind how agreeable it would be to his friend the Marquis to be surprised in this sociable way by a pop[2] visit; and how much more agreeable to himself to get into snug quarters in a chateau, and have a relish of the Marquis's well-known kitchen, and a smack of his superior champagne and Burgundy, rather than put up with the miserable lodgment and miserable fare of a provincial inn. In a few minutes, therefore, the meager postilion was cracking his whip like a very devil, or like a true Frenchman, up the long, straight avenue that led to the chateau.

You have no doubt all seen French chateaus, as everybody travels in France nowadays. This was one of the oldest, standing naked and alone in the midst of a desert of gravel walks and cold stone terraces, with a cold-looking, formal garden, cut into angles and rhomboids, and a cold, leafless park, divided geometrically by straight alleys, and two or three cold-looking, noseless statues; and fountains spouting cold water enough to make one's teeth chatter. At least such was the feeling they imparted on the wintry day of my uncle's visit; though, in hot summer weather, I'll warrant there was glare enough to scorch one's eyes out.

The smacking of the postilion's whip, which grew more and more intense the nearer they approached, frightened a flight of pigeons out of a dovecot, and rooks out of the roofs, and finally a crew of servants out of the chateau, with the Marquis at their

[1] A French title of rank. [2] Unexpected.

head. He was enchanted to see my uncle, for his chateau, like the house of our worthy host, had not many more guests at the time than it could accommodate. So he kissed my uncle on each cheek, after the French fashion, and ushered him into the castle.

The Marquis did the honors of the house with the urbanity of his country. In fact, he was proud of his old family chateau, for part of it was extremely old. There was a tower and chapel which had been built almost before the memory of man; but the rest was more modern, the castle having been nearly demolished during the wars of the league.[1] The Marquis dwelt upon this event with great satisfaction, and seemed really to entertain a grateful feeling towards Henry IV.[2] for having thought his paternal mansion worth battering down. He had many stories to tell of the prowess of his ancestors; and several skullcaps, helmets, and crossbows, and divers huge boots and buff jerkins, to show, which had been worn by the leaguers. Above all, there was a two-handed sword, which he could hardly wield, but which he displayed as a proof that there had been giants in his family.

In truth, he was but a small descendant from such great warriors. When you looked at their bluff visages and brawny limbs, as depicted in their portraits, and then at the little Marquis, with his spindleshanks[3] and his sallow lantern visage,[4] flanked with a pair of powdered earlocks, or *aîles de pigeon*,[5] that seemed ready to fly away with it, you could hardly believe him to be of the same race. But when you looked at the eyes that sparkled out like a beetle's from each side of his hooked nose, you saw at once that he inherited all the fiery spirit of his forefathers. In

1 "Wars of the league," i.e., civil wars in France (1562–98), caused originally by the enmity between the Catholics and the Huguenots, but developing later into a purely political strife in which most of the nations of Europe took part.

2 Henry IV. (1553–1610), King of France and Navarre, the first of the House of Bourbon.

3 Slender legs.

4 "Lantern visage," i.e., long, thin face.

5 Curls of hair near the ears; literally, pigeon wings.

fact, a Frenchman's spirit never exhales, however his body may dwindle. It rather rarefies, and grows more inflammable, as the earthly particles diminish; and I have seen valor enough in a little fiery-hearted French dwarf to have furnished out a tolerable giant.

When once the Marquis, as was his wont, put on one of the old helmets stuck up in his hall, though his head no more filled it than a dry pea its peascod, yet his eyes flashed from the bottom of the iron cavern with the brilliancy of carbuncles; and when he poised the ponderous two-handed sword of his ancestors, you would have thought you saw the doughty little David wielding the sword of Goliath,[1] which was unto him like a weaver's beam.

However, gentlemen, I am dwelling too long on this description of the Marquis and his chateau, but you must excuse me; he was an old friend of my uncle, and whenever my uncle told the story, he was always fond of talking a great deal about his host. Poor little Marquis! He was one of that handful of gallant courtiers who made such a devoted but hopeless stand in the cause of their sovereign, in the chateau of the Tuileries,[2] against the irruption of the mob on the sad 10th of August. He displayed the valor of a preux[3] French chevalier to the last; flourishing feebly his little court sword with a *ça-ça!*[4] in face of a whole legion of *sans-culottes;*[5] but was pinned to the wall like

[1] A giant leader of the Philistines, supposed to have flourished in the eleventh century B.C. He challenged the Israelites to single combat, but no one was found willing to meet him except David (Hebrew poet, prophet, and king, born about 1090 B.C.), who slew him with a stone from his sling (see 1 Sam. xvii).

[2] During the French Revolution, Louis XVI., King of France, took up his abode in the palace of the Tuileries in Paris. On Aug. 10, 1792, a mob, armed with weapons of every sort, rushed upon the Tuileries, battering its walls and destroying everything within reach. The King escaped, but was shortly after imprisoned, and executed in 1793.

[3] Brave. [4] A French exclamation; literally, "so, so."

[5] *Sans-culottes* ("ragamuffins") was a name applied in contempt to the

a butterfly, by the pike of a *poissarde*,[1] and his heroic soul was borne up to heaven on his *aîles de pigeon*.

But all this has nothing to do with my story. To the point, then. When the hour arrived for retiring for the night, my uncle was shown to his room in a venerable old tower. It was the oldest part of the chateau, and had in ancient times been the donjon or stronghold; of course the chamber was none of the best. The Marquis had put him there, however, because he knew him to be a traveler of taste, and fond of antiquities; and also because the better apartments were already occupied. Indeed, he perfectly reconciled my uncle to his quarters by mentioning the great personages who had once inhabited them, all of whom were, in some way or other, connected with the family. If you would take his word for it, John Baliol, or, as he called him, Jean de Bailleul, had died of chagrin in this very chamber, on hearing of the success of his rival, Robert de Bruce, at the battle of Bannockburn;[2] and when he added that the Duke de Guise[3] had slept in it, my uncle was fain to felicitate himself on being honored with such distinguished quarters.

democrats of the French Revolution, who were styled the "ragamuffins of society." They, however, glorying in the name, affected a negligence of dress, and went about in blouses, red caps, and wooden shoes.

[1] A woman of the lowest class.

[2] Towards the end of the thirteenth century a great feud arose in Scotland over the succession to the throne. The chief claimants were Robert Bruce (1210–95) and John Baliol (1249–1315). Edward I. of England, claiming the right of decision, handed the government over to Baliol, subject to his command. After a while, however, the Scots, desiring perfect freedom, rebelled, with Baliol as their leader. The English conquered, Baliol resigned and was taken prisoner, and the King of England ruled Scotland through a council of regency till 1305. Then Scotland again sprang to arms under Robert Bruce (1274–1329), grandson of the original claimant. The English were badly defeated in the battle of Bannockburn, June 24, 1314, and the Scotch independence was regained, though not formally recognized by England till 1328.

[3] There are several men famous in French history who bear the name of "Duke de Guise." This probably refers to Henry I. of Lorraine (1550–88),

The night was shrewd[1] and windy, and the chamber none of the warmest. An old, long-faced, long-bodied servant, in quaint livery, who attended upon my uncle, threw down an armful of wood beside the fireplace, gave a queer look about the room, and then wished him *bon repos*,[2] with a grimace and a shrug that would have been suspicious from any other than an old French servant.

The chamber had indeed a wild, crazy look, enough to strike any one who had read romances with apprehension and foreboding. The windows were high and narrow, and had once been loopholes, but had been rudely enlarged, as well as the extreme thickness of the walls would permit; and the ill-fitted casements rattled to every breeze. You would have thought, on a windy night, some of the old leaguers were tramping and clanking about the apartment in their huge boots and rattling spurs. A door which stood ajar, and, like a true French door, would stand ajar in spite of every reason and effort to the contrary, opened upon a long, dark corridor, that led the Lord knows whither, and seemed just made for ghosts to air themselves in, when they turned out of their graves at midnight. The wind would spring up into a hoarse murmur through this passage, and creak the door to and fro, as if some dubious ghost were balancing in its mind whether to come in or not. In a word, it was precisely the kind of comfortless apartment that a ghost, if ghost there were in the chateau, would single out for its favorite lounge.

My uncle, however, though a man accustomed to meet with strange adventures, apprehended none at the time. He made several attempts to shut the door, but in vain. Not that he apprehended anything, for he was too old a traveler to be daunted by a wild-looking apartment; but the night, as I have said, was cold and gusty, and the wind howled about the old turret pretty much as it does round this old mansion at this moment,

Duke de Guise, surnamed "Balafré the Scarred," on account of a wound received in battle.

[1] Keen. [2] Good night.

and the breeze from the long dark corridor came in as damp and as chilly as if from a dungeon. My uncle, therefore, since he could not close the door, threw a quantity of wood on the fire, which soon sent up a flame in the great wide-mouthed chimney that illumined the whole chamber, and made the shadow of the tongs on the opposite wall look like a long-legged giant. My uncle now clambered on the top of the half score of mattresses which form a French bed, and which stood in a deep recess; then, tucking himself snugly in, and burying himself up to the chin in the bedclothes, he lay looking at the fire, and listening to the wind, and thinking how knowingly he had come over his friend the Marquis for a night's lodging—and so he fell asleep.

He had not taken above half of his first nap when he was awakened by the clock of the chateau, in the turret over his chamber, which struck midnight. It was just such an old clock as ghosts are fond of. It had a deep, dismal tone, and struck so slowly and tediously that my uncle thought it would never have done. He counted and counted till he was confident he counted thirteen, and then it stopped.

The fire had burned low, and the blaze of the last fagot was almost expiring, burning in small blue flames, which now and then lengthened up into little white gleams. My uncle lay with his eyes half closed, and his nightcap drawn almost down to his nose. His fancy was already wandering, and began to mingle up the present scene with the crater of Vesuvius, the French Opera, the Coliseum[1] at Rome, Dolly's chophouse in London, and all the farrago of noted places with which the brain of a traveler is crammed,—in a word, he was just falling asleep.

Suddenly he was roused by the sound of footsteps, slowly pacing along the corridor. My uncle, as I have often heard him say himself, was a man not easily frightened. So he lay quiet,

[1] A large Roman amphitheater, one of the most imposing structures in the world, finished in A.D. 80. When first built it was chiefly used for the combats of the gladiators. It is now in ruins.

supposing this some other guest, or some servant on his way to bed. The footsteps, however, approached the door; the door gently opened,—whether of its own accord, or whether pushed open, my uncle could not distinguish; a figure all in white glided in. It was a female, tall and stately, and of a commanding air. Her dress was of an ancient fashion, ample in volume, and sweeping the floor. She walked up to the fireplace, without regarding my uncle, who raised his nightcap with one hand, and stared earnestly at her. She remained for some time standing by the fire, which, flashing up at intervals, cast blue and white gleams of light, that enabled my uncle to remark her appearance minutely.

Her face was ghastly pale, and perhaps rendered still more so by the bluish light of the fire. It possessed beauty, but its beauty was saddened by care and anxiety. There was the look of one accustomed to trouble, but of one whom trouble could not cast down nor subdue; for there was still the predominating air of proud, unconquerable resolution. Such, at least, was the opinion formed by my uncle, and he considered himself a great physiognomist.

The figure remained, as I said, for some time by the fire, putting out first one hand, then the other; then each foot alternately, as if warming itself; for your ghosts, if ghost it really was, are apt to be cold. My uncle, furthermore, remarked that it wore high-heeled shoes, after an ancient fashion, with paste or diamond buckles that sparkled as though they were alive. At length the figure turned gently round, casting a glassy look about the apartment, which, as it passed over my uncle, made his blood run cold, and chilled the very marrow in his bones. It then stretched its arms towards heaven, clasped its hands, and wringing them in a supplicating manner, glided slowly out of the room.

My uncle lay for some time meditating on this visitation, for (as he remarked when he told me the story), though a man of firmness, he was also a man of reflection, and did not reject a thing because it was out of the regular course of events. However, being, as I have before said, a great traveler, and accus-

tomed to strange adventures, he drew his nightcap resolutely over his eyes, turned his back to the door, hoisted the bedclothes high over his shoulders, and gradually fell asleep.

How long he slept he could not say, when he was awakened by the voice of some one at his bedside. He turned round, and beheld the old French servant, with his earlocks in tight buckles on each side of a long, lantern face, on which habit had deeply wrinkled an everlasting smile. He made a thousand grimaces, and asked a thousand pardons for disturbing Monsieur, but the morning was considerable advanced. While my uncle was dressing, he called vaguely to mind the visitor of the preceding night. He asked the ancient domestic what lady was in the habit of rambling about this part of the chateau at night. The old valet shrugged his shoulders as high as his head, laid one hand on his bosom, threw open the other with every finger extended, made a most whimsical grimace which he meant to be complimentary, and replied that it was not for him to know anything of *les bonnes fortunes*[1] of Monsieur.

My uncle saw there was nothing satisfactory to be learned in this quarter. After breakfast, he was walking with the Marquis through the modern apartments of the chateau, sliding over the well-waxed floors of silken saloons, amidst furniture rich in gilding and brocade, until they came to a long picture gallery, containing many portraits, some in oil and some in chalks.

Here was an ample field for the eloquence of his host, who had all the pride of a nobleman of the *ancien régime*.[2] There was not a grand name in Normandy, and hardly one in France, which was not, in some way or other, connected with his house. My uncle stood listening with inward impatience, resting sometimes on one leg, sometimes on the other, as the little Marquis descanted, with his usual fire and vivacity, on the achievements of his ancestors, whose portraits hung along the wall; from the

1 Adventures; literally, the good fortune.

2 Ancient order of things, that obtained in France prior to the Revolution (see Note 1, p. 29).

martial deeds of the stern warriors in steel, to the gallantries and intrigues of the blue-eyed gentlemen, with fair, smiling faces, powdered earlocks, laced ruffles, and pink and blue silk coats and breeches; not forgetting the conquests of the lovely shepherdesses, with hooped petticoats, and waists no thicker than an hourglass, who appeared ruling over their sheep and their swains, with dainty crooks decorated with fluttering ribbons.

In the midst of his friend's discourse, my uncle was startled on beholding a full-length portrait, the very counterpart of his visitor of the preceding night.

"Methinks," said he, pointing to it, "I have seen the original of this portrait."

"*Pardonnez moi*,"[1] replied the Marquis politely, "that can hardly be, as the lady has been dead more than a hundred years. That was the beautiful Duchess de Longueville, who figured during the minority of Louis XIV."

"And was there anything remarkable in her history?"

Never was question more unlucky. The little Marquis immediately threw himself into the attitude of a man about to tell a long story. In fact, my uncle had pulled upon himself the whole history of the civil war of the Fronde,[2] in which the beautiful Duch-

[1] Excuse me.

[2] Louis XIV. (1638–1715) succeeded his father as King of France at the age of five, but during his minority the management of the government was virtually left to Cardinal Jules Mazarin (1602–61), who had succeeded Cardinal Richelieu as prime minister. The war of the Fronde was a rising of the nobles to throw off the yoke laid on them by Richelieu, who had brought them into subjection to the King. The immediate cause of the outbreak was the attempt of Mazarin to punish the Parliament of Paris for having brought about the dismissal of a favorite, but corrupt, agent of his. When Broussel, a member especially beloved by the people, was arrested, the mob rose in arms, seized whatever they could lay hands on, and barricaded the streets of Paris, Aug. 5, 1648. Broussel being released, quiet was for a time restored. Then it was that the discontented nobles united their cause with that of Paris and the Parliament, and a new war of the Fronde broke out. The chief instigator was the Duchess de Longueville (1619–79), daughter of Henri de Bourbon, Prince de Condé. She induced her husband, the Duc de Longue

ess had played so distinguished a part. Turenne, Coligni, Mazarin, were called up from their graves to grace his narration; nor were the affairs of the barricaders nor the chivalry of the portes cochères[1] forgotten. My uncle began to wish himself a thousand leagues off from the Marquis and his merciless memory, when suddenly the little man's recollections took a more interesting turn. He was relating the imprisonment of the Duke de Longueville with the Princes Condé and Conti in the chateau of Vincennes,[2] and the ineffectual efforts of the Duchess to rouse the sturdy Normans to their rescue. He had come to that part where she was invested by the royal forces in the castle of Dieppe.[3]

"The spirit of the Duchess," proceeded the Marquis, "rose from her trials. It was astonishing to see so delicate and beautiful a being buffet so resolutely with hardships. She determined on a desperate means of escape. You may have seen the chateau in which she was mewed up,—an old ragged wart of an edifice, standing on the knuckle of a hill, just above the rusty little town of Dieppe. One dark, unruly night she issued secretly out of a small postern gate of the castle, which the enemy had neglected to guard. The postern gate is there to this very day; opening

ville (1595–1663), who was a French general, to join the cause, and also her two brothers, Louis II. de Bourbon, the Great Condé (1621–86), and Armand de Bourbon, Prince Conti (1629–66). In 1650, Condé, Conti, and the Duc de Longueville were arrested, but the Duchess de Longueville escaped and secured the aid of Turenne (Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, 1611–75), Marshal of France, who attempted to release the prisoners. Soon thereafter, all being weary of the war, Louis XIV. was invited back to Paris, Mazarin was recalled, and the leaders of the war were obliged to flee.

[1] Twelve thousand men were raised to carry on the war of the Fronde. By act of Parliament each *porte cochère* ("carriage entrance") was taxed to furnish one mounted soldier. This cavalry was known as *la cavalerie des portes cochères;* that is, the cavalry, or chivalry, of the carriage entrances.

[2] A town of France near Paris. The castle of Vincennes, erected in the midst of a forest, at first used as a royal residence, was later made a state prison.

[3] A seaport of France on the English Channel, at one time the principal port of France.

upon a narrow bridge over a deep fosse between the castle and the brow of the hill. She was followed by her female attendants, a few domestics, and some gallant cavaliers, who still remained faithful to her fortunes. Her object was to gain a small port about two leagues distant, where she had privately provided a vessel for her escape in case of emergency.

"The little band of fugitives were obliged to perform the distance on foot. When they arrived at the port the wind was high and stormy, the tide contrary, the vessel anchored far off in the road, and no means of getting on board but by a fishing shallop which lay tossing like a cockle shell on the edge of the surf. The Duchess determined to risk the attempt. The seamen endeavored to dissuade her, but the imminence of her danger on shore, and the magnanimity of her spirit, urged her on. She had to be borne to the shallop in the arms of a mariner. Such was the violence of the wind and waves that he faltered, lost his foothold, and let his precious burden fall into the sea.

"The Duchess was nearly drowned, but partly through her own struggles, partly by the exertions of the seamen, she got to land. As soon as she had a little recovered strength, she insisted on renewing the attempt. The storm, however, had by this time become so violent as to set all efforts at defiance. To delay was to be discovered and taken prisoner. As the only resource left, she procured horses, mounted with her female attendants, *en croupe*,[1] behind the gallant gentlemen who accompanied her, and scoured the country to seek some temporary asylum.

"While the Duchess," continued the Marquis, laying his forefinger on my uncle's breast to arouse his flagging attention — "while the Duchess, poor lady, was wandering amid the tempest in this disconsolate manner, she arrived at this chateau. Her approach caused some uneasiness; for the clattering of a troop of horse at dead of night up the avenue of a lonely chateau, in those unsettled times, and in a troubled part of the country, was enough to occasion alarm.

[1] On pillions, or pads, behind the saddle.

"A tall, broad-shouldered chasseur, armed to the teeth, galloped ahead, and announced the name of the visitor. All uneasiness was dispelled. The household turned out with flambeaux to receive her, and never did torches gleam on a more weather-beaten, travel-stained band than came tramping into the court. Such pale, careworn faces, such bedraggled dresses, as the poor Duchess and her females presented, each seated behind her cavalier; while the half drenched, half drowsy pages and attendants seemed ready to fall from their horses with sleep and fatigue.

"The Duchess was received with a hearty welcome by my ancestor. She was ushered into the hall of the chateau, and the fires soon crackled and blazed, to cheer herself and her train; and every spit and stewpan was put in requisition to prepare ample refreshment for the wayfarers.

"She had a right to our hospitalities," continued the Marquis, drawing himself up with a slight degree of stateliness, "for she was related to our family. I'll tell you how it was. Her father, Henry de Bourbon, Prince of Condé"[1]—

"But did the Duchess pass the night in the chateau?" said my uncle rather abruptly, terrified at the idea of getting involved in one of the Marquis's genealogical discussions.

"Oh, as to the Duchess, she was put into the very apartment you occupied last night, which at that time was a kind of state apartment. Her followers were quartered in the chambers opening upon the neighboring corridor, and her favorite page slept in an adjoining closet. Up and down the corridor walked the great chasseur who had announced her arrival, and who acted as a kind of sentinel or guard. He was a dark, stern, powerful-looking fellow; and as the light of a lamp in the corridor fell upon his deeply marked face and sinewy form, he seemed capable of defending the castle with his single arm.

"It was a rough, rude night, about this time of the year—

[1] Henry de Bourbon, Prince of Condé (1552–58), father of the Duchess de Longueville, and of the Grand Condé and the Prince of Conti.

apropos! now I think of it, last night was the anniversary of her visit. I may well remember the precise date, for it was a night not to be forgotten by our house. There is a singular tradition concerning it in our family." Here the Marquis hesitated, and a cloud seemed to gather about his bushy eyebrows. "There is a tradition — that a strange occurrence took place that night, — a strange, mysterious, inexplicable occurrence" — Here he checked himself, and paused.

"Did it relate to that lady?" inquired my uncle eagerly.

"It was past the hour of midnight," resumed the Marquis, "when the whole chateau" — Here he paused again. My uncle made a movement of anxious curiosity.

"Excuse me," said the Marquis, a slight blush streaking his sallow visage. "There are some circumstances connected with our family history which I do not like to relate. That was a rude period, a time of great crimes among great men; for you know high blood, when it runs wrong, will not run tamely, like blood of the *canaille*.[1] Poor lady! But I have a little family pride, that — excuse me — we will change the subject, if you please."

My uncle's curiosity was piqued. The pompous and magnificent introduction had led him to expect something wonderful in the story to which it served as a kind of avenue. He had no idea of being cheated out of it by a sudden fit of unreasonable squeamishness. Besides, being a traveler in quest of information, he considered it his duty to inquire into everything.

The Marquis, however, evaded every question.

"Well," said my uncle, a little petulantly, "whatever you may think of it, I saw that lady last night."

The Marquis stepped back and gazed at him with surprise.

"She paid me a visit in my bedchamber."

The Marquis pulled out his snuffbox with a shrug and a smile, taking this, no doubt, for an awkward piece of English pleasantry, which politeness required him to be charmed with.

[1] Lowest class of people.

My uncle went on gravely, however, and related the whole circumstance. The Marquis heard him through with profound attention, holding his snuffbox unopened in his hand. When the story was finished, he tapped on the lid of his box deliberately, took a long, sonorous pinch of snuff—

"Bah!" said the Marquis, and walked towards the other end of the gallery.

Here the narrator paused. The company waited for some time for him to resume his narration; but he continued silent.

"Well," said the inquisitive gentleman, "and what did your uncle say then?"

"Nothing," replied the other.

"And what did the Marquis say further?"

"Nothing."

"And is that all?"

"That is all," said the narrator, filling a glass of wine.

"I surmise," said the shrewd old gentleman with the waggish nose, "I surmise the ghost must have been the old housekeeper, walking her rounds to see that all was right."

"Bah!" said the narrator. "My uncle was too much accustomed to strange sights not to know a ghost from a housekeeper."

There was a murmur round the table, half of merriment, half of disappointment. I was inclined to think the old gentleman had really an after part of his story in reserve; but he sipped his wine and said nothing more; and there was an odd expression about his dilapidated countenance which left me in doubt whether he were in drollery or earnest.

"Egad," said the knowing gentleman with the flexible nose, "this story of your uncle puts me in mind of one that used to be told of an aunt of mine, by the mother's side; though I don't know that it will bear a comparison, as the good lady was not so prone to meet with strange adventures. But at any rate you shall have it."

THE ADVENTURE OF MY AUNT.

MY aunt was a lady of large frame, strong mind, and great resolution. She was what might be termed a very manly woman. My uncle was a thin, puny little man, very meek and acquiescent, and no match for my aunt. It was observed that he dwindled and dwindled gradually away, from the day of his marriage. His wife's powerful mind was too much for him; it wore him out. My aunt, however, took all possible care of him; had half the doctors in town to prescribe for him; made him take all their prescriptions, and dosed him with physic enough to cure a whole hospital. All was in vain. My uncle grew worse and worse the more dosing and nursing he underwent, until in the end he added another to the long list of matrimonial victims who have been killed with kindness.

"And was it his ghost that appeared to her?" asked the inquisitive gentleman, who had questioned the former story-teller.

"You shall hear," replied the narrator. — My aunt took on mightily for the death of her poor dear husband. Perhaps she felt some compunction at having given him so much physic, and nursed him into the grave. At any rate, she did all that a widow could do to honor his memory. She spared no expense in either the quantity or quality of her mourning weeds; wore a miniature of him about her neck as large as a little sundial, and had a full-length portrait of him always hanging in her bedchamber. All the world extolled her conduct to the skies; and it was determined that a woman who behaved so well to the memory of one husband deserved soon to get another.

It was not long after this that she went to take up her residence in an old country seat in Derbyshire,[1] which had long been in the care of merely a steward and housekeeper. She took most of

[1] Derbyshire, or Derby, is a county of England, whose capital, Derby, is thirty-five miles northeast of Birmingham.

her servants with her, intending to make it her principal abode. The house stood in a lonely, wild part of the country, among the gray Derbyshire hills, with a murderer hanging in chains on a bleak height in full view.

The servants from town were half frightened out of their wits at the idea of living in such a dismal, pagan-looking place; especially when they got together in the servants' hall in the evening, and compared notes on all the hobgoblin stories picked up in the course of the day. They were afraid to venture alone about the gloomy, black-looking chambers. My lady's maid, who was troubled with nerves, declared she could never sleep alone in such a "gashly,[1] rummaging old building;" and the footman, who was a kind-hearted young fellow, did all in his power to cheer her up.

My aunt was struck with the lonely appearance of the house. Before going to bed, therefore, she examined well the fastnesses of the doors and windows; locked up the plate with her own hands, and carried the keys, together with a little box of money and jewels, to her own room; for she was a notable woman, and always saw to all things herself. Having put the keys under her pillow, and dismissed her maid, she sat by her toilet arranging her hair; for being, in spite of her grief for my uncle, rather a buxom widow, she was somewhat particular about her person. She sat for a little while looking at her face in the glass, first on one side, then on the other, as ladies are apt to do when they would ascertain whether they have been in good looks; for a roistering country squire of the neighborhood, with whom she had flirted when a girl, had called that day to welcome her to the country.

All of a sudden she thought she heard something move behind her. She looked hastily round, but there was nothing to be seen. Nothing but the grimly painted portrait of her poor dear man, hanging against the wall.

She gave a heavy sigh to his memory, as she was accustomed

[1] Ghastly.

to do whenever she spoke of him in company, and then went on adjusting her nightdress, and thinking of the squire. Her sigh was reëchoed, or answered, by a long-drawn breath. She looked round again, but no one was to be seen. She ascribed these sounds to the wind oozing through the rat holes of the old mansion, and proceeded leisurely to put her hair in papers, when, all at once, she thought she perceived one of the eyes of the portrait move.

"The back of her head being towards it!" said the story-teller with the ruined head,—"good!"

"Yes, sir," replied dryly the narrator, "her back being towards the portrait, but her eyes fixed on its reflection in the glass."—Well, as I was saying, she perceived one of the eyes of the portrait move. So strange a circumstance, as you may well suppose, gave her a sudden shock. To assure herself of the fact, she put one hand to her forehead as if rubbing it; peeped through her fingers, and moved the candle with the other hand. The light of the taper gleamed on the eye, and was reflected from it. She was sure it moved. Nay, more, it seemed to give her a wink, as she had sometimes known her husband to do when living! It struck a momentary chill to her heart; for she was a lone woman, and felt herself fearfully situated.

The chill was but transient. My aunt, who was almost as resolute a personage as your uncle, sir [turning to the old story-teller], became instantly calm and collected. She went on adjusting her dress. She even hummed an air, and did not make even a single false note. She casually overturned a dressing box; took a candle and picked up the articles one by one from the floor; pursued a rolling pincushion that was making the best of its way under the bed; then opened the door; looked for an instant into the corridor, as if in doubt whether to go; and then walked quietly out.

She hastened downstairs, ordered the servants to arm themselves with the weapons first at hand, placed herself at their head, and returned almost immediately.

Her hastily levied army presented a formidable force. The steward had a rusty blunderbuss, the coachman a loaded whip, the footman a pair of horse pistols, the cook a huge chopping knife, and the butler a bottle in each hand. My aunt led the van with a red-hot poker, and in my opinion she was the most formidable of the party. The waiting maid, who dreaded to stay alone in the servants' hall, brought up the rear, smelling to a broken bottle of volatile salts, and expressing her terror of the "ghostesses." "Ghosts!" said my aunt resolutely. "I'll singe their whiskers for them!"

They entered the chamber. All was still and undisturbed as when she had left it. They approached the portrait of my uncle.

"Pull down that picture!" cried my aunt. A heavy groan, and a sound like the chattering of teeth, issued from the portrait. The servants shrunk back; the maid uttered a faint shriek, and clung to the footman for support.

"Instantly!" added my aunt, with a stamp of the foot.

The picture was pulled down, and from a recess behind it, in which had formerly stood a clock, they hauled forth a round-shouldered, black-bearded varlet, with a knife as long as my arm, but trembling all over like an aspen leaf.

"Well, and who was he? No ghost, I suppose," said the inquisitive gentleman.

"A knight of the post,"[1] replied the narrator, "who had been smitten with the worth of the wealthy widow; or rather, a marauding Tarquin,[2] who had stolen into her chamber to violate her purse, and rifle her strong box, when all the house should be asleep. In plain terms," continued he, "the vagabond was a loose, idle fellow of the neighborhood, who had once been a servant in the house, and had been employed to assist in arranging

[1] "Knight of the post," i.e., an offender who has been punished at the whipping post; hence, a sharper in general.

[2] Tarquin the Proud, Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, seventh and last king of Rome (died about B.C. 495). His reign was characterized by bloodshed, violence, and aggressive warfare.

it for the reception of its mistress. He confessed that he had contrived this hiding place for his nefarious purpose, and had borrowed an eye from the portrait by way of a reconnoitering hole."

"And what did they do with him? Did they hang him?" resumed the questioner.

"Hang him! How could they?" exclaimed a beetle-browed [1] barrister with a hawk's nose. "The offense was not capital. No robbery, no assault had been committed. No forcible entry or breaking into the premises"—

"My aunt," said the narrator, "was a woman of spirit, and apt to take the law in her own hands. She had her own notions of cleanliness also. She ordered the fellow to be drawn through the horsepond, to cleanse away all offenses, and then to be well rubbed down with an oaken towel." [2]

"And what became of him afterwards?" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"I do not exactly know. I believe he was sent on a voyage of improvement to Botany Bay." [3]

"And your aunt?" said the inquisitive gentleman. "I'll warrant she took care to make her maid sleep in the room with her after that."

"No, sir, she did better; she gave her hand shortly after to the roistering squire; for she used to observe that it was a dismal thing for a woman to sleep alone in the country."

"She was right," observed the inquisitive gentleman, nodding sagaciously; "but I am sorry they did not hang that fellow."

It was agreed on all hands that the last narrator had brought his tale to the most satisfactory conclusion, though a country clergyman present regretted that the uncle and aunt, who figured in the different stories, had not been married together; they certainly would have been well matched.

[1] Having shaggy, overhanging eyebrows, like the antennæ of beetles.

[2] "An oaken towel," i.e., a cudgel.

[3] A harbor on the eastern coast of Australia, where there was an English convict settlement.

"But I don't see, after all," said the inquisitive gentleman, "that there was any ghost in this last story."

"Oh, if it's ghosts you want, honey," cried the Irish Captain of Dragoons, "if it's ghosts you want, you shall have a whole regiment of them. And since these gentlemen have given the adventures of their uncles and aunts, faith, and I'll even give you a chapter out of my own family histry."

THE BOLD DRAGOON;

OR,

THE ADVENTURE OF MY GRANDFATHER.

MY grandfather was a bold dragoon, for it's a profession, d'ye see, that has run in the family. All my forefathers have been dragoons, and died on the field of honor, except myself, and I hope my posterity may be able to say the same; however, I don't mean to be vainglorious. Well, my grandfather, as I said, was a bold dragoon, and had served in the Low Countries.[1] In fact, he was one of that very army which, according to my uncle Toby,[2] swore so terribly in Flanders. He could swear a good stick[3] himself; and, moreover, was the very man that introduced the doctrine Corporal Trim[4] mentions of radical heat and radical moisture, or, in other words, the mode of keeping out the damps of ditch water by burnt brandy. Be that as it may, it's nothing

[1] Another name for the Netherlands.

[2] Uncle Toby, a character in Sterne's Tristram Shandy, was a captain who was wounded at the siege of Namur in Flanders, and was obliged to retire from the service, but who was always indulging in reminiscences about the battle (see Tristram Shandy, vol. iii., chap. xi.).

[3] "A good stick," i.e., a good deal.

[4] Corporal Trim was Uncle Toby's attendant, and was represented as faithful, simple-minded, and affectionate. For his doctrine of radical heat and radical moisture, see Tristram Shandy, vol. v., chap. xxxviii.

to the purport of my story. I only tell it to show you that my grandfather was a man not easily to be humbugged. He had seen service, or, according to his own phrase, he had seen the devil, and that's saying everything.

Well, gentlemen, my grandfather was on his way to England, for which he intended to embark from Ostend [1]—bad luck to the place! for one where I was kept by storms and head winds for three long days, and the devil of a [2] jolly companion or pretty girl to comfort me. Well, as I was saying, my grandfather was on his way to England, or rather to Ostend—no matter which, it's all the same. So one evening, towards nightfall, he rode jollily into Bruges.[3] Very like you all know Bruges, gentlemen; a queer, old-fashioned, Flemish [4] town, once, they say, a great place for trade and money-making in old times, when the Mynheers were in their glory; but almost as large and as empty as an Irishman's pocket at the present day. Well, gentlemen, it was at the time of the annual fair. All Bruges was crowded; and the canals swarmed with Dutch boats, and the streets swarmed with Dutch merchants; and there was hardly any getting along for goods, wares, and merchandises, and peasants in big breeches, and women in half a score of petticoats.

My grandfather rode jollily along, in his easy, slashing way, for he was a saucy, sunshiny fellow, staring about him at the motley crowd, and the old houses with gable ends to the street, and storks' nests in the chimneys; winking at the juffrouws [5] who showed their faces at the windows, and joking the women right and left in the street; all of whom laughed, and took it in amazing good part; for though he did not know a word of the language, yet he had always a knack of making himself understood among the women.

[1] A seaport town of Belgium in West Flanders.

[2] "The devil of a," a phrase used to contradict a statement.

[3] The capital of the province of West Flanders in Belgium. It owes its name to the number of bridges which cross its canals.

[4] Pertaining to Flanders. [5] Young ladies.

Well, gentlemen, it being the time of the annual fair, all the town was crowded, every inn and tavern full, and my grandfather applied in vain from one to the other for admittance. At length he rode up to an old rickety inn, that looked ready to fall to pieces, and which all the rats would have run away from if they could have found room in any other house to put their heads. It was just such a queer building as you see in Dutch pictures, with a tall roof that reached up into the clouds, and as many garrets, one over the other, as the seven heavens of Mahomet.[1] Nothing had saved it from tumbling down but a stork's nest on the chimney, which always brings good luck to a house in the Low Countries; and at the very time of my grandfather's arrival, there were two of these long-legged birds of grace standing like ghosts on the chimney top. Faith, but they've kept the house on its legs to this very day, for you may see it any time you pass through Bruges, as it stands there yet, only it is turned into a brewery of strong Flemish beer, — at least it was so when I came that way after the battle of Waterloo.[2]

My grandfather eyed the house curiously as he approached. It might not have altogether struck his fancy, had he not seen in large letters over the door,

"HIER VERKOOPT MAN GOEDEN DRANK."[3]

My grandfather had learned enough of the language to know that the sign promised good liquor. "This is the house for me," said he, stopping short before the door.

The sudden appearance of a dashing dragoon was an event in

[1] Mahomet, or Mohammed (570–632), the founder of Mohammedanism, a widely diffused religion. He believed in seven heavens, placed one above the other, to which, as alleged by his followers, he made a journey one night, accompanied by the angel Gabriel.

[2] The battle fought in 1815 in which the English and Prussians, under the Duke of Wellington, defeated the French, under Napoleon Bonaparte, and rescued Europe from French domination.

[3] Here good drink is sold.

an old inn frequented only by the peaceful sons of traffic. A rich burgher of Antwerp, a stately, ample man in a broad Flemish hat, and who was the great man and great patron of the establishment, sat smoking a clean, long pipe on one side of the door; a fat little distiller of Geneva,[1] from Schiedam,[2] sat smoking on the other; and the bottle-nosed[3] host stood in the door, and the comely hostess, in crimped cap, beside him; and the hostess's daughter, a plump Flanders lass, with long gold pendants in her ears, was at a side window.

"Humph!" said the rich burgher of Antwerp, with a sulky glance at the stranger.

"De duyvel!"[4] said the fat little distiller of Schiedam.

The landlord saw, with the quick glance of a publican, that the new guest was not at all to the taste of the old ones; and, to tell the truth, he did not like my grandfather's saucy eye. He shook his head. "Not a garret in the house but is full."

"Not a garret!" echoed the landlady.

"Not a garret!" echoed the daughter.

The burgher of Antwerp and the little distiller of Schiedam continued to smoke their pipes sullenly, eying the enemy askance from under their broad hats, but said nothing.

My grandfather was not a man to be browbeaten. He threw the reins on his horse's neck, cocked his head on one side, stuck one arm akimbo. "Faith and troth!" said he, "but I'll sleep in this house this very night." As he said this he gave a slap on his thigh, by way of emphasis. The slap went to the landlady's heart.

He followed up the vow by jumping off his horse, and making his way past the staring Mynheers into the public room. Maybe you've been in the barroom of an old Flemish inn. Faith, but a handsome chamber it was as you'd wish to see; with a brick

[1] A strongly alcoholic liquor made in Holland; called also "Hollands."
[2] A town of Holland famed for its gin.
[3] Having a nose bottle-shaped, or large at the end.
[4] The devil.

floor, and a great fireplace, with the whole Bible history in glazed tiles; and then the mantelpiece, pitching itself head foremost out of the wall, with a whole regiment of cracked teapots and earthen jugs paraded on it; not to mention half a dozen great Delft[1] platters, hung about the room by way of pictures, and the little bar in one corner, and the bouncing barmaid inside of it, with a red calico cap, and yellow eardrops.

My grandfather snapped his fingers over his head, as he cast an eye round the room. "Faith, this is the very house I've been looking after," said he.

There was some further show of resistance on the part of the garrison; but my grandfather was an old soldier, and an Irishman to boot,[2] and not easily repulsed, especially after he had got into the fortress. So he blarneyed the landlord, kissed the landlord's wife, tickled the landlord's daughter, chucked the barmaid under the chin; and it was agreed on all hands that it would be a thousand pities, and a burning shame into the bargain, to turn such a bold dragoon into the streets. So they laid their heads together — that is to say, my grandfather and the landlady — and it was at length agreed to accommodate him with an old chamber that had been for some time shut up.

"Some say it's haunted," whispered the landlord's daughter; "but you are a bold dragoon, and I dare say don't fear ghosts."

"The devil a bit!" said my grandfather, pinching her plump cheek. "But if I should be troubled by ghosts, I've been to the Red Sea in my time, and have a pleasant way of laying[3] them, my darling."

And then he whispered something to the girl which made her laugh, and give him a good-humored box on the ear. In short, there was nobody knew better how to make his way among the petticoats[4] than my grandfather.

In a little while, as was his usual way, he took complete pos-

[1] Pottery made at the city of Delft in Holland.
[2] "To boot," i.e., in addition.
[3] Exorcising. [4] Women

session of the house, swaggering all over it; into the stable to look after his horse, into the kitchen to look after his supper. He had something to say or do with every one; smoked with the Dutchmen, drank with the Germans, slapped the landlord on the shoulder, romped with his daughter and the barmaid. Never, since the days of Alley Croaker, had such a rattling blade[1] been seen. The landlord stared at him with astonishment; the landlord's daughter hung her head and giggled whenever he came near; and as he swaggered along the corridor, with his sword trailing by his side, the maids looked after him and whispered to one another, "What a proper[2] man!"

At supper, my grandfather took command of the table d'hôte as though he had been at home; helped everybody, not forgetting himself; talked with every one, whether he understood their language or not; and made his way into the intimacy of the rich burgher of Antwerp, who had never been known to be sociable with any one during his life. In fact, he revolutionized the whole establishment, and gave it such a rouse that the very house reeled with it. He outsat every one at table, excepting the little fat distiller of Schiedam, who sat soaking a long time before he broke forth; but when he did, he was a very devil incarnate. He took a violent affection for my grandfather; so they sat drinking and smoking, and telling stories, and singing Dutch and Irish songs, without understanding a word each other said, until the little Hollander was fairly swamped with his own gin and water, and carried off to bed, whooping and hiccoughing, and trolling the burden of a Low Dutch love song.

Well, gentlemen, my grandfather was shown to his quarters up a large staircase composed of loads of hewn timber; and through long rigmarole[3] passages, hung with blackened paintings of fish and fruit and game, and country frolics, and huge kitchens, and portly burgomasters, such as you see about old-fashioned Flemish inns, till at length he arrived at his room.

[1] "Rattling blade," i.e., reckless fellow.
[2] Handsome. [3] Confusing.

An old times chamber it was, sure enough, and crowded with all kinds of trumpery. It looked like an infirmary for decayed and superannuated furniture, where everything diseased or disabled was sent to nurse or to be forgotten. Or rather it might be taken for a general congress of old legitimate movables, where every kind and country had a representative. No two chairs were alike. Such high backs, and low backs, and leather bottoms, and worsted bottoms, and straw bottoms, and no bottoms; and cracked marble tables with curiously carved legs, holding balls in their claws, as though they were going to play at ninepins.

My grandfather made a bow to the motley assemblage as he entered, and, having undressed himself, placed his light in the fireplace, asking pardon of the tongs, which seemed to be making love to the shovel in the chimney corner, and whispering soft nonsense in its ear.

The rest of the guests were by this time sound asleep, for your Mynheers are huge sleepers. The housemaids, one by one, crept up yawning to their attics; and not a female head in the inn was laid on a pillow that night without dreaming of the bold dragoon.

My grandfather, for his part, got into bed, and drew over him one of those great bags of down, under which they smother a man in the Low Countries; and there he lay, melting between two feather beds, like an anchovy sandwich between two slices of toast and butter. He was a warm-complexioned man, and this smothering played the very deuce with him.[1] So, sure enough, in a little time it seemed as if a legion of imps were twitching at him, and all the blood in his veins was in a fever heat.

He lay still, however, until all the house was quiet, excepting the snoring of the Mynheers from the different chambers, who answered one another in all kinds of tones and cadences, like so many bullfrogs in a swamp. The quieter the house became the more unquiet became my grandfather. He waxed warmer and warmer, until at length the bed became too hot to hold him.

[1] "Played the very," etc., i.e., annoyed him very much.

"Maybe the maid had warmed it too much?" said the curious gentleman inquiringly.

"I rather think the contrary," replied the Irishman. "But, be that as it may, it grew too hot for my grandfather."

"Faith, there's no standing this any longer," says he. So he jumped out of bed, and went strolling about the house.

"What for?" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"Why, to cool himself, to be sure — or perhaps to find a more comfortable bed — or perhaps — But no matter what he went for; he never mentioned, and there's no use in taking up our time in conjecturing."

Well, my grandfather had been for some time absent from his room, and was returning, perfectly cool, when just as he reached the door he heard a strange noise within. He paused and listened. It seemed as if some one were trying to hum a tune in defiance of the asthma. He recollected the report of the room being haunted; but he was no believer in ghosts, so he pushed the door gently open and peeped in.

Egad, gentlemen, there was a gambol carrying on within enough to have astonished St. Anthony[1] himself. By the light of the fire he saw a pale, weazen-faced fellow, in a long flannel gown and a tall white nightcap with a tassel to it, who sat by the fire with a bellows under his arm by way of bagpipe, from which he forced the asthmatical music that had bothered my grandfather. As he played, too, he kept twitching about with a thousand queer contortions, nodding his head, and bobbing about his tasseled nightcap.

My grandfather thought this very odd and mighty presumptuous, and was about to demand what business he had to play his wind instrument in another gentleman's quarters, when a new cause of astonishment met his eye. From the opposite side of the room, a long-backed, bandy-legged chair, covered with leather, and studded all over in a coxcombical fashion with little brass

[1] St. Anthony (251–356) was the Egyptian founder of monachism, the doctrine of a life of religious seclusion.

nails, got suddenly into motion, thrust out first a claw foot, then a crooked arm, and at length, making a leg, slid gracefully up to an easy-chair of tarnished brocade, with a hole in its bottom, and led it gallantly out in a ghostly minuet about the floor.

The musician now played fiercer and fiercer, and bobbed his head and his nightcap about like mad. By degrees the dancing mania seemed to seize upon all the other pieces of furniture. The antique, long-bodied chairs paired off in couples and led down a country dance; a three-legged stool danced a hornpipe, though horribly puzzled by its supernumerary limb; while the amorous tongs seized the shovel round the waist, and whirled it about the room in a German waltz. In short, all the movables got in motion, pirouetting hands across, right and left, like so many devils; all except a great clothespress, which kept courtesying and courtesying in a corner, like a dowager, in exquisite time to the music, being rather too corpulent to dance, or perhaps at a loss for a partner.

My grandfather concluded the latter to be the reason; so being, like a true Irishman, devoted to the sex, and at all times ready for a frolic, he bounced into the room, called to the musician to strike up Paddy O'Rafferty,[1] capered up to the clothespress, and seized upon the two handles to lead her out; when—whirr! the whole revel was at an end. The chairs, tables, tongs, and shovel slunk in an instant as quietly into their places as if nothing had happened, and the musician vanished up the chimney, leaving the bellows behind him in his hurry. My grandfather found himself seated in the middle of the floor, with the clothespress sprawling before him, and the two handles jerked off, and in his hands.

"Then, after all, this was a mere dream," said the inquisitive gentleman.

"The divil a bit of a dream!" replied the Irishman. "There never was a truer fact in this world. Faith, I should have liked to see any man tell my grandfather it was a dream."

Well, gentlemen, as the clothespress was a mighty heavy body,

[1] An old popular Irish tune.

and my grandfather likewise, particularly in rear, you may easily suppose that two such heavy bodies coming to the ground would make a bit of a noise. Faith, the old mansion shook as though it had mistaken it for an earthquake. The whole garrison was alarmed. The landlord, who slept below, hurried up with a candle to inquire the cause, but with all his haste his daughter had arrived at the scene of uproar before him. The landlord was followed by the landlady, who was followed by the bouncing barmaid, who was followed by the simpering chambermaids, all holding together, as well as they could, such garments as they first laid hands on; but all in a terrible hurry to see what the deuce was to pay in the chamber of the bold dragoon.

My grandfather related the marvelous scene he had witnessed, and the broken handles of the prostrate clothespress bore testimony to the fact. There was no contesting such evidence; particularly with a lad of my grandfather's complexion, who seemed able to make good every word either with sword or shillalah.[1] So the landlord scratched his head and looked silly, as he was apt to do when puzzled. The landlady scratched—no, she did not scratch her head, but she knit her brow, and did not seem half pleased with the explanation. But the landlady's daughter corroborated it by recollecting that the last person who had dwelt in that chamber was a famous juggler, who died of St. Vitus's dance,[2] and had no doubt infected all the furniture.

This set all things to rights, particularly when the chambermaids declared that they had all witnessed strange carryings on in that room; and as they declared this upon their honors, there could not remain a doubt upon this subject.

"And did your grandfather go to bed again in that room?" said the inquisitive gentleman.

[1] A cudgel, so called from Shillelagh, a place in Ireland famous for its oaks.

[2] St. Vitus's dance, or chorea, is a nervous disease marked by involuntary motions. It is called after St. Vitus, a Sicilian child martyr of the early part of the fourth century, who was believed to grant to his devotees relief from the dancing mania, which prevailed during the middle ages.

"That's more than I can tell. Where he passed the rest of the night was a secret he never disclosed. In fact, though he had seen much service, he was but indifferently acquainted with geography, and apt to make blunders in his travels about inns at night, which it would have puzzled him sadly to account for in the morning."

"Was he ever apt to walk in his sleep?" said the knowing old gentleman.

"Never that I heard of."

There was a little pause after this rigmarole Irish romance, when the old gentleman with the haunted head observed that the stories hitherto related had rather a burlesque tendency. "I recollect an adventure, however," added he, "which I heard of during a residence at Paris, for the truth of which I can undertake to vouch, and which is of a very grave and singular nature."

ADVENTURE OF THE GERMAN STUDENT.

ON a stormy night, in the tempestuous times of the French Revolution, a young German was returning to his lodgings, at a late hour, across the old part of Paris. The lightning gleamed, and the loud claps of thunder rattled through the lofty narrow streets—but I should first tell you something about this young German.

Gottfried Wolfgang was a young man of good family. He had studied for some time at Göttingen,[1] but being of a visionary and enthusiastic character, he had wandered into those wild and speculative doctrines which have so often bewildered German students. His secluded life, his intense application, and the singular nature of his studies, had an effect on both mind and body. His health was impaired, his imagination diseased.

[1] A town of Hanover in Prussia. Its university, founded in 1734, was at one time the chief seat of learning in Germany.

He had been indulging in fanciful speculations on spiritual essences, until, like Swedenborg,[1] he had an ideal world of his own around him. He took up a notion, I do not know from what cause, that there was an evil influence hanging over him; an evil genius or spirit seeking to insnare him and insure his perdition. Such an idea working on his melancholy temperament produced the most gloomy effects. He became haggard and desponding. His friends discovered the mental malady preying upon him, and determined that the best cure was a change of scene; he was sent, therefore, to finish his studies amidst the splendors and gayeties of Paris.

Wolfgang arrived at Paris at the breaking out of the revolution. The popular delirium at first caught his enthusiastic mind, and he was captivated by the political and philosophical theories of the day; but the scenes of blood which followed shocked his sensitive nature, disgusted him with society and the world, and made him more than ever a recluse. He shut himself up in a solitary apartment in the *Pays Latin*,[2] the quarter of students. There, in a gloomy street not far from the monastic walls of the Sorbonne,[3] he pursued his favorite speculations. Sometimes he spent hours together in the great libraries of Paris, those catacombs of departed authors, rummaging among their hoards of dusty and obsolete works in quest of food for his unhealthy appetite. He was, in a manner, a literary ghoul, feeding in the charnel house of decayed literature.

Wolfgang, though solitary and recluse, was of an ardent temperament, but for a time it operated merely upon his imagina-

[1] Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), founder of the New Jerusalem Church. In his later life he lived entirely in a spiritual world, claiming to have direct intercourse with God, whose prophet he believed himself to be.

[2] Latin Quarter; the name of a district of Paris at one time occupied almost exclusively by students.

[3] The Sorbonne, founded by Robert de Sorbon, confessor of Louis XI., was originally a theological college. The building is now occupied by the University of Paris.

tion. He was too shy and ignorant of the world to make any advances to the fair, but he was a passionate admirer of female beauty, and in his lonely chamber would often lose himself in reveries on forms and faces which he had seen, and his fancy would deck out images of loveliness far surpassing the reality.

While his mind was in this excited and sublimated state, a dream produced an extraordinary effect upon him. It was of a female face of transcendent beauty. So strong was the impression made that he dreamed of it again and again. It haunted his thoughts by day, his slumbers by night; in fine, he became passionately enamored of this shadow of a dream. This lasted so long that it became one of those fixed ideas which haunt the minds of melancholy men, and are at times mistaken for madness.

Such was Gottfried Wolfgang, and such his situation at the time I mentioned. He was returning home late one stormy night, through some of the old and gloomy streets of the *Marais*,[1] the ancient part of Paris. The loud claps of thunder rattled among the high houses of the narrow streets. He came to the Place de Grève,[2] the square where public executions are performed. The lightning quivered about the pinnacles of the ancient Hôtel de Ville,[3] and shed flickering gleams over the open space in front. As Wolfgang was crossing the square, he shrank back with horror at finding himself close by the guillotine. It was the height of the reign of terror, when this dreadful instrument of death stood ever ready, and its scaffold was continually running with the blood of the virtuous and the brave.

[1] The Marais Quarter was a gloomy, old-fashioned square of Paris, part of what is now known as the Place de Vosges.

[2] Place de Grève, now known as the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, has always been associated with dark cruelties. The stake, scaffold, and guillotine reigned there at various times.

[3] The Hôtel de Ville, a marvel of architectural beauty, was completed in 1628, and was the great townhall of Paris until destroyed by fire in 1871. It was the usual rallying place of the democratic party during the French revolutions.

It had that very day been actively employed in the work of carnage, and there it stood in grim array, amidst a silent and sleeping city, waiting for fresh victims.

Wolfgang's heart sickened within him, and he was turning shuddering from the horrible engine, when he beheld a shadowy form, cowering as it were at the foot of the steps which led up to the scaffold. A succession of vivid flashes of lightning revealed it more distinctly. It was a female figure, dressed in black. She was seated on one of the lower steps of the scaffold, leaning forward, her face hid in her lap; and her long disheveled tresses, hanging to the ground, streaming with the rain, which fell in torrents. Wolfgang paused. There was something awful in this solitary monument of woe. The female had the appearance of being above the common order. He knew the times to be full of vicissitude, and that many a fair head, which had once been pillowed on down, now wandered houseless. Perhaps this was some poor mourner whom the dreadful ax had rendered desolate, and who sat here heartbroken on the strand of existence, from which all that was dear to her had been launched into eternity.

He approached, and addressed her in the accents of sympathy. She raised her head and gazed wildly at him. What was his astonishment at beholding, by the bright glare of the lightning, the very face which had haunted him in his dreams. It was pale and disconsolate, but ravishingly beautiful.

Trembling with violent and conflicting emotions, Wolfgang again accosted her. He spoke something of her being exposed at such an hour of the night, and to the fury of such a storm, and offered to conduct her to her friends. She pointed to the guillotine with a gesture of dreadful signification.

"I have no friend on earth!" said she.

"But you have a home," said Wolfgang.

"Yes—in the grave!"

The heart of the student melted at the words.

"If a stranger dare make an offer," said he, "without danger

of being misunderstood, I would offer my humble dwelling as a shelter; myself as a devoted friend. I am friendless myself in Paris, and a stranger in the land; but if my life could be of service, it is at your disposal, and should be sacrificed before harm or indignity should come to you."

There was an honest earnestness in the young man's manner that had its effect. His foreign accent, too, was in his favor; it showed him not to be a hackneyed inhabitant of Paris. Indeed, there is an eloquence in true enthusiasm that is not to be doubted. The homeless stranger confided herself implicitly to the protection of the student.

He supported her faltering steps across the Pont Neuf,[1] and by the place where the statue of Henry IV. had been overthrown by the populace. The storm had abated, and the thunder rumbled at a distance. All Paris was quiet; that great volcano of human passion slumbered for a while, to gather fresh strength for the next day's eruption. The student conducted his charge through the ancient streets of the *Pays Latin*, and by the dusky walls of the Sorbonne, to the great dingy hotel which he inhabited. The old portress who admitted them stared with surprise at the unusual sight of the melancholy Wolfgang with a female companion.

On entering his apartment, the student, for the first time, blushed at the scantiness and indifference of his dwelling. He had but one chamber, an old-fashioned salon, heavily carved, and fantastically furnished with the remains of former magnificence; for it was one of those hotels in the quarter of the Luxembourg Palace[2] which had once belonged to nobility. It was lumbered with books and papers, and all the usual apparatus of a student, and his bed stood in a recess at one end.

[1] A bridge across the Seine. On it stands a statue of Henry IV., erected to replace one which had stood there from 1635 to 1791, when it was knocked down by the populace and converted into pieces of ordnance.

[2] One of the most magnificent palaces in Paris, erected in 1615. During the French Revolution it was converted into a prison for the confinement of noble families.

When lights were brought, and Wolfgang had a better opportunity of contemplating the stranger, he was more than ever intoxicated by her beauty. Her face was pale, but of a dazzling fairness, set off by a profusion of raven hair that hung clustering about it. Her eyes were large and brilliant, with a singular expression approaching almost to wildness. As far as her black dress permitted her shape to be seen, it was of perfect symmetry. Her whole appearance was highly striking, though she was dressed in the simplest style. The only thing approaching to an ornament which she wore was a broad black band round her neck, clasped by diamonds.

The perplexity now commenced with the student how to dispose of the helpless being thus thrown upon his protection. He thought of abandoning his chamber to her, and seeking shelter for himself elsewhere. Still, he was so fascinated by her charms, there seemed to be such a spell upon his thoughts and senses, that he could not tear himself from her presence. Her manner, too, was singular and unaccountable. She spoke no more of the guillotine. Her grief had abated. The attentions of the student had first won her confidence, and then, apparently, her heart. She was evidently an enthusiast like himself, and enthusiasts soon understand each other.

In the infatuation of the moment Wolfgang avowed his passion for her. He told her the story of his mysterious dream, and how she had possessed his heart before he had even seen her. She was strangely affected by his recital, and acknowledged to have felt an impulse towards him equally unaccountable. It was the time for wild theory and wild actions. Old prejudices and superstitions were done away; everything was under the sway of the "Goddess of Reason."[1] Among other rubbish of the old times, the forms and ceremonies of marriage began to be considered superfluous bonds for honorable minds. Social compacts

[1] In the subversion of all existing institutions during the French Revolution, the worship of human reason, personified as the Goddess of Reason, was instituted as a new religion.

were the vogue. Wolfgang was too much of a theorist not to be tainted by the liberal doctrines of the day.

"Why should we separate?" said he. "Our hearts are united; in the eye of reason and honor we are as one. What need is there of sordid forms to bind high souls together?"

The stranger listened with emotion; she had evidently received illumination at the same school.

"You have no home nor family," continued he; "let me be everything to you; or rather, let us be everything to one another. If form is necessary, form shall be observed,—there is my hand. I pledge myself to you forever."

"Forever?" said the stranger solemnly.

"Forever!" repeated Wolfgang.

The stranger clasped the hand extended to her. "Then I am yours," murmured she, and sank upon his bosom.

The next morning the student left his bride sleeping, and sallied forth at an early hour to seek more spacious apartments suitable to the change in his situation. When he returned, he found the stranger lying with her head hanging over the bed, and one arm thrown over it. He spoke to her, but received no reply. He advanced to awaken her from her uneasy posture. On taking her hand it was cold—there was no pulsation—her face was pallid and ghastly. In a word, she was a corpse.

Horrified and frantic, he alarmed the house. A scene of confusion ensued. The police was summoned. As the officer of police entered the room, he started back on beholding the corpse.

"Great heaven!" cried he, "how did this woman come here?"

"Do you know anything about her?" said Wolfgang eagerly.

"Do I?" exclaimed the officer; "she was guillotined yesterday."

He stepped forward, undid the black collar round the neck of the corpse, and the head rolled on the floor!

The student burst into a frenzy. "The fiend! the fiend has gained possession of me!" shrieked he. "I am lost forever."

They tried to soothe him, but in vain. He was possessed with the frightful belief that an evil spirit had reanimated the dead body to insnare him. He went distracted, and died in a madhouse.

Here the old gentleman with the haunted head finished his narrative.

"And is this really a fact?" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"A fact not to be doubted," replied the other. "I had it from the best authority. The student told it me himself. I saw him in a madhouse in Paris."

ADVENTURE OF THE MYSTERIOUS PICTURE.

As one story of the kind produces another, and as all the company seemed fully engrossed with the subject, and disposed to bring their relatives and ancestors upon the scene, there is no knowing how many more strange adventures we might have heard, had not a corpulent old fox hunter, who had slept soundly through the whole, now suddenly awakened, with a loud and long-drawn yawn. The sound broke the charm; the ghosts took to flight, as though it had been cockcrowing,[1] and there was a universal move for bed.

"And now for the haunted chamber," said the Irish captain, taking his candle.

"Ay, who's to be the hero of the night?" said the gentleman with the ruined head.

"That we shall see in the morning," said the old gentleman with the nose. "Whoever looks pale and grizzly will have seen the ghost."

"Well, gentlemen," said the Baronet, "there's many a true thing said in jest; in fact, one of you will sleep in the room to-night."

"What!—a haunted room?—a haunted room? I claim the

[1] The time at which cocks begin to crow; i.e., the dawn of day, when ghosts were always supposed to disappear.

adventure — and I — and I — and I," said a dozen guests, talking and laughing at the same time.

"No, no," said mine host, "there is a secret about one of my rooms on which I feel disposed to try an experiment; so, gentlemen, none of you shall know who has the haunted chamber until circumstances reveal it. I will not even know it myself, but will leave it to chance and the allotment of the housekeeper. At the same time, if it will be any satisfaction to you, I will observe, for the honor of my paternal mansion, that there's scarcely a chamber in it but is well worthy of being haunted."

We now separated for the night, and each went to his allotted room. Mine was in one wing of the building, and I could not but smile at its resemblance in style to those eventful apartments described in the tales of the supper table. It was spacious and gloomy, decorated with lampblack portraits, a bed of ancient damask, with a tester[1] sufficiently lofty to grace a couch of state, and a number of massive pieces of old-fashioned furniture. I drew a great claw-footed armchair before the wide fireplace; stirred up the fire; sat looking into it, and musing upon the odd stories I had heard, until, partly overcome by the fatigue of the day's hunting, and partly by the wine and wassail of mine host, I fell asleep in my chair.

The uneasiness of my position made my slumber troubled, and laid me at the mercy of all kinds of wild and fearful dreams. Now it was that my perfidious dinner and supper rose in rebellion against my peace. I was hag-ridden[2] by a fat saddle of mutton; a plum pudding weighed like lead upon my conscience; the merry thought of a capon filled me with horrible suggestions; and a deviled leg of a turkey stalked in all kinds of diabolical shapes through my imagination. In short, I had a violent fit of the nightmare. Some strange, indefinite evil seemed hanging over me, which I could not avert; something terrible and loathsome oppressed, me which I could not shake off. I was conscious of being

1 Canopy over a bed.

2 Ridden by a hag or witch; hence, afflicted with nightmare.

asleep, and strove to rouse myself, but every effort redoubled the evil; until gasping, struggling, almost strangling, I suddenly sprang bolt upright in my chair, and awoke.

The light on the mantelpiece had burned low, and the wick was divided; there was a great winding sheet made by the dripping wax on the side towards me. The disordered taper emitted a broad, flaring flame, and threw a strong light on a painting over the fireplace which I had not hitherto observed. It consisted merely of a head, or rather a face, staring full upon me, with an expression that was startling. It was without a frame, and at the first glance I could hardly persuade myself that it was not a real face thrusting itself out of the dark oaken panel. I sat in my chair gazing at it, and the more I gazed the more it disquieted me. I had never before been affected in the same way by any painting. The emotions it caused were strange and indefinite. They were something like what I have heard ascribed to the eyes of the basilisk, or like that mysterious influence in reptiles termed fascination. I passed my hand over my eyes several times, as if seeking instinctively to brush away the illusion,—in vain. They instantly reverted to the picture, and its chilling, creeping influence over my flesh and blood was redoubled. I looked round the room on other pictures, either to divert my attention, or to see whether the same effect would be produced by them. Some of them were grim enough to produce the effect, if the mere grimness of the painting produced it. No such thing; my eye passed over them all with perfect indifference, but the moment it reverted to this visage over the fireplace, it was as if an electric shock darted through me. The other pictures were dim and faded, but this one protruded from a plain background in the strongest relief, and with wonderful truth of coloring. The expression was that of agony,—the agony of intense bodily pain; but a menace scowled upon the brow, and a few sprinklings of blood added to its ghastliness. Yet it was not all these characteristics; it was some horror of the mind, some inscrutable antipathy awakened by this picture, which harrowed up my feelings.

I tried to persuade myself that this was chimerical; that my brain was confused by the fumes of mine host's good cheer, and in some measure by the odd stories about paintings which had been told at supper. I determined to shake off these vapors of the mind; rose from my chair; walked about the room; snapped my fingers; rallied myself; laughed aloud. It was a forced laugh, and the echo of it in the old chamber jarred upon my ear. I walked to the window, and tried to discern the landscape through the glass. It was pitch darkness, and a howling storm without, and as I heard the wind moan among the trees, I caught a reflection of this accursed visage in the pane of glass, as though it were staring through the window at me. Even the reflection of it was thrilling.

How was this vile nervous fit — for such I now persuaded myself it was — to be conquered? I determined to force myself not to look at the painting, but to undress quickly and get into bed. I began to undress, but in spite of every effort, I could not keep myself from stealing a glance every now and then at the picture; and a glance was sufficient to distress me. Even when my back was turned to it, the idea of this strange face behind me, peeping over my shoulder, was insupportable. I threw off my clothes and hurried into bed, but still this visage gazed upon me. I had a full view of it in my bed, and for some time could not take my eyes from it. I had grown nervous to a dismal degree. I put out the light, and tried to force myself to sleep — all in vain. The fire, gleaming up a little, threw an uncertain light about the room, leaving, however, the region of the picture in deep shadow. What, thought I, if this be the chamber about which mine host spoke, as having a mystery reigning over it? I had taken his words merely as spoken in jest; might they have a real import? I looked around. The faintly lighted apartment had all the qualifications requisite for a haunted chamber. It began in my infected imagination to assume strange appearances; the old portraits turned paler and paler, and blacker and blacker; the streaks of light and shadow thrown among the quaint articles of furniture

gave them more singular shapes and characters. There was a huge, dark clothespress of antique form, gorgeous in brass and lustrous with wax, that began to grow oppressive to me.

"Am I, then," thought I, "indeed the hero of the haunted room? Is there really a spell laid upon me, or is this all some contrivance of mine host to raise a laugh at my expense?" The idea of being hag-ridden by my own fancy all night, and then bantered on my haggard looks the next day, was intolerable; but the very idea was sufficient to produce the effect, and to render me still more nervous. "Pish!" said I, "it can be no such thing. How could my worthy host imagine that I, or any man, would be so worried by a mere picture? It is my own diseased imagination that torments me."

I turned in bed, and shifted from side to side, to try to fall asleep; but all in vain. When one cannot get asleep by lying quiet, it is seldom that tossing about will effect the purpose. The fire gradually went out, and left the room in total darkness. Still I had the idea of that inexplicable countenance gazing and keeping watch upon me through the gloom; nay, what was worse, the very darkness seemed to magnify its terrors. It was like having an unseen enemy hanging about one in the night. Instead of having one picture now to worry me, I had a hundred. I fancied it in every direction. "There it is," thought I, "and there! and there! with its horrible and mysterious expression still gazing and gazing on me! No; if I must suffer the strange and dismal influence, it were better face a single foe than thus be haunted by a thousand images of it."

Whoever has been in a state of nervous agitation must know that the longer it continues the more uncontrollable it grows. The very air of the chamber seemed at length infected by the baleful presence of this picture. I fancied it hovering over me. I almost felt the fearful visage from the wall approaching my face; it seemed breathing upon me. "This is not to be borne," said I at length, springing out of bed. "I can stand this no longer; I shall only tumble and toss about here all night, make

a very specter of myself, and become the hero of the haunted chamber in good earnest. Whatever be the ill consequences, I'll quit this cursed room and seek a night's rest elsewhere. They can but laugh at me, at all events, and they'll be sure to have the laugh upon me if I pass a sleepless night, and show them a haggard and woe-begone visage in the morning."

All this was half muttered to myself as I hastily slipped on my clothes, which having done, I groped my way out of the room and downstairs to the drawing-room. Here, after tumbling over two or three pieces of furniture, I made out to reach a sofa, and stretching myself upon it, determined to bivouac there for the night. The moment I found myself out of the neighborhood of that strange picture, it seemed as if the charm were broken. All its influence was at an end. I felt assured that it was confined to its own dreary chamber, for I had, with a sort of instinctive caution, turned the key when I closed the door. I soon calmed down, therefore, into a state of tranquillity; from that into a drowsiness; and finally into a deep sleep, out of which I did not awake until the housemaid, with her besom[1] and her matin song, came to put the room in order. She stared at finding me stretched upon the sofa, but I presume circumstances of the kind were not uncommon after hunting dinners in her master's bachelor establishment, for she went on with her song and her work, and took no further heed of me.

I had an unconquerable repugnance to return to my chamber; so I found my way to the butler's quarters, made my toilet in the best way circumstances would permit, and was among the first to appear at the breakfast table. Our breakfast was a substantial fox hunter's repast, and the company generally assembled at it. When ample justice had been done to the tea, coffee, cold meats, and humming ale — for all these were furnished in abundance, according to the tastes of the different guests — the conversation began to break out with all the liveliness and freshness of morning mirth.

[1] Broom.

"But who is the hero of the haunted chamber? who has seen the ghost last night?" said the inquisitive gentleman, rolling his lobster eyes about the table.

The question set every tongue in motion; a vast deal of bantering, criticising of countenances, of mutual accusation and retort, took place. Some had drunk deep, and some were unshaven, so that there were suspicious faces enough in the assembly. I alone could not enter with ease and vivacity into the joke; I felt tongue-tied, embarrassed. A recollection of what I had seen and felt the preceding night still haunted my mind. It seemed as if the mysterious picture still held a thrall upon me. I thought also that our host's eye was turned on me with an air of curiosity. In short, I was conscious that I was the hero of the night, and felt as if every one might read it in my looks. The joke, however, passed over, and no suspicion seemed to attach to me. I was just congratulating myself on my escape, when a servant came in, saying that the gentleman who had slept on the sofa in the drawing-room had left his watch under one of the pillows. My repeater was in his hand.

"What!" said the inquisitive gentleman, "did any gentleman sleep on the sofa?"

"Soho, soho! a hare, a hare!"[1] cried the old gentleman with the flexible nose.

I could not avoid acknowledging the watch, and was rising in great confusion, when a boisterous old squire who sat beside me exclaimed, slapping me on the shoulder, "'Sblood, lad, thou art the man as has seen the ghost!"

The attention of the company was immediately turned on me. If my face had been pale the moment before, it now glowed almost to burning. I tried to laugh, but could only make a grimace, and found the muscles of my face twitching at sixes and sevens,[2] and totally out of all control.

It takes but little to raise a laugh among a set of fox hunters.

[1] A sportsman's cry on the discovery of a hare.

[2] "At sixes and sevens," i.e., in confusion.

There was a world of merriment and joking on the subject, and as I never relished a joke overmuch when it was at my own expense, I began to feel a little nettled. I tried to look cool and calm, and to restrain my pique; but the coolness and calmness of a man in a passion are confounded[1] treacherous.

"Gentlemen," said I, with a slight cocking of the chin and a bad attempt at a smile, "this is all very pleasant — ha, ha! — very pleasant; but I'd have you know, I am as little superstitious as any of you — ha, ha! — and as to anything like timidity — you may smile, gentlemen, but I trust there's no one here means to insinuate that — as to a room's being haunted — I repeat, gentlemen [growing a little warm at seeing a cursed grin breaking out round me], as to a room's being haunted, I have as little faith in such silly stories as any one. But, since you put the matter home to me, I will say that I have met with something in my room strange and inexplicable to me. [A shout of laughter.] Gentlemen, I am serious; I know well what I am saying; I am calm, gentlemen [striking my fist upon the table], by Heaven, I am calm! I am neither trifling, nor do I wish to be trifled with. [The laughter of the company suppressed, and with ludicrous attempts at gravity.] There is a picture in the room in which I was put last night that has had an effect upon me the most singular and incomprehensible."

"A picture?" said the old gentleman with the haunted head. "A picture!" cried the narrator with the nose. "A picture! a picture!" echoed several voices. Here there was an ungovernable peal of laughter. I could not contain myself. I started up from my seat, looked round on the company with fiery indignation, thrust both of my hands into my pockets, and strode up to one of the windows as though I would have walked through it. I stopped short, looked out upon the landscape without distinguishing a feature of it, and felt my gorge[2] rising almost to suffocation.

Mine host saw it was time to interfere. He had maintained an

[1] Confoundedly; extremely. [2] Indignation.

air of gravity through the whole of the scene; and now stepped forth, as if to shelter me from the overwhelming merriment of my companions.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I dislike to spoil sport, but you have had your laugh, and the joke of the haunted chamber has been enjoyed. I must now take the part of my guest. I must not only vindicate him from your pleasantries, but I must reconcile him to himself, for I suspect he is a little out of humor with his own feelings; and, above all, I must crave his pardon for having made him the subject of a kind of experiment. Yes, gentlemen, there is something strange and peculiar in the chamber to which our friend was shown last night; there is a picture in my house which possesses a singular and mysterious influence, and with which there is connected a very curious story. It is a picture to which I attach a value from a variety of circumstances; and though I have often been tempted to destroy it, from the odd and uncomfortable sensations which it produces in every one that beholds it, yet I have never been able to prevail upon myself to make the sacrifice. It is a picture I never like to look upon myself, and which is held in awe by all my servants. I have therefore banished it to a room but rarely used, and should have had it covered last night, had not the nature of our conversation, and the whimsical talk about a haunted chamber, tempted me to let it remain, by way of experiment, to see whether a stranger, totally unacquainted with its story, would be affected by it."

The words of the Baronet had turned every thought into a different channel. All were anxious to hear the story of the mysterious picture; and, for myself, so strangely were my feelings interested, that I forgot to feel piqued at the experiment my host had made upon my nerves, and joined eagerly in the general entreaty. As the morning was stormy, and denied all egress, my host was glad of any means of entertaining his company; so, drawing his armchair towards the fire, he began.

ADVENTURE OF THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER.

MANY years since, when I was a young man, and had just left Oxford, I was sent on the grand tour to finish my education. I believe my parents had tried in vain to inoculate me with wisdom; so they sent me to mingle with society, in hopes that I might take it the natural way. Such, at least, appears the reason for which nine tenths of our youngsters are sent abroad.

In the course of my tour I remained some time at Venice. The romantic character of that place delighted me; I was very much amused by the air of adventure and intrigue prevalent in this region of masks and gondolas; and I was exceedingly smitten by a pair of languishing black eyes, that played upon my heart from under an Italian mantle; so I persuaded myself that I was lingering at Venice to study men and manners; at least I persuaded my friends so, and that answered all my purposes.

I was a little prone to be struck by peculiarities in character and conduct, and my imagination was so full of romantic associations with Italy that I was always on the lookout for adventure. Everything chimed in with such a humor in this old mermaid of a city. My suite of apartments were in a proud, melancholy palace on the Grand Canal, formerly the residence of a magnifico,[1] and sumptuous with the traces of decayed grandeur. My gondolier was one of the shrewdest of his class, active, merry, intelligent, and, like his brethren, secret as the grave; that is to say, secret to all the world except his master. I had not had him a week before he put me behind all the curtains in Venice.[2] I liked the silence and mystery of the place, and when I

1 A nobleman or grandee of Venice, so called in courtesy.

2 "Put me behind," etc., i.e., told me all the secrets and private affairs of the people of Venice.

sometimes saw from my window a black gondola gliding mysteriously along in the dusk of the evening, with nothing visible but its little glimmering lantern, I would jump into my own zendeletta,[1] and give a signal for pursuit. "But I am running away from my subject with the recollection of youthful follies," said the Baronet, checking himself. "Let us come to the point."

Among my familiar resorts was a cassino under the arcades on one side of the grand Square of St. Mark.[2] Here I used frequently to lounge and take my ice, on those warm summer nights when, in Italy, everybody lives abroad until morning. I was seated here one evening when a group of Italians took their seats at a table on the opposite side of the saloon. Their conversation was gay and animated, and carried on with Italian vivacity and gesticulation. I remarked among them one young man, however, who appeared to take no share and find no enjoyment in the conversation, though he seemed to force himself to attend to it. He was tall and slender, and of extremely prepossessing appearance. His features were fine, though emaciated. He had a profusion of black glossy hair, that curled lightly about his head, and contrasted with the extreme paleness of his countenance. His brow was haggard; deep furrows seemed to have been plowed into his visage by care, not by age, for he was evidently in the prime of youth. His eye was full of expression and fire, but wild and unsteady. He seemed to be tormented by some strange fancy or apprehension. In spite of every effort to fix his attention on the conversation of his companions, I noticed that every now and then he would turn his head slowly round, give a glance over his shoulder, and then withdraw it with a sudden jerk, as if something painful met his eye. This was repeated at intervals of about a minute, and he appeared hardly

[1] Small boat.

[2] The Square of St. Mark, or Piazza di San Marco, the principal promenade of Venice, is nearly surrounded by the sea. Magnificent churches and palaces occupy the square, and around it extends a vast gallery containing many elegant shops and cafés.

to have recovered from one shock before I saw him slowly preparing to encounter another.

After sitting some time in the cassino, the party paid for the refreshment they had taken, and departed. The young man was the last to leave the saloon, and I remarked him glancing behind him in the same way, just as he passed out of the door. I could not resist the impulse to rise and follow him; for I was at an age when a romantic feeling of curiosity is easily awakened. The party walked slowly down the arcades, talking and laughing as they went. They crossed the Piazzetta,[1] but paused in the middle of it to enjoy the scene. It was one of those moonlight nights, so brilliant and clear in the pure atmosphere of Italy. The moonbeams streamed on the tall tower[2] of St. Mark, and lighted up the magnificent front and swelling domes of the cathedral.[3] The party expressed their delight in animated terms. I kept my eye upon the young man. He alone seemed abstracted and self-occupied. I noticed the same singular and, as it were, furtive, glance over the shoulder which had attracted my attention in the cassino. The party moved on, and I followed. They passed along the walk called the Broglio, turned the corner of the Ducal Palace,[4] and getting into the gondola, glided swiftly away.

The countenance and conduct of this young man dwelt upon my mind, and interested me exceedingly. I met him a day or two afterwards in a gallery of paintings. He was evidently a connoisseur, for he always singled out the most masterly productions, and a few remarks drawn from him by his companions showed an intimate acquaintance with the art. His own taste,

[1] The Piazzetta ("small square") runs at right angles from the southeast corner of the Piazza of St. Mark to the Grand Canal.

[2] The famous clock tower of the Square of St. Mark, which has on its face a dial resplendent with gold. It was built in 1494 and restored in 1859.

[3] The St. Mark Cathedral, one of the most magnificent in the world.

[4] The Ducal Palace, or Palace of the Doges, is a magnificent structure, first built in 800. It has been destroyed five times, and each time restored with greater splendor. The Broglio is the lower gallery, or piazza, under the Ducal Palace.

however, ran on singular extremes; on Salvator Rosa,[1] in his most savage and solitary scenes; on Raphael,[1] Titian,[1] and Correggio,[1] in their softest delineations of female beauty; on these he would occasionally gaze with transient enthusiasm. But this seemed only a momentary forgetfulness. Still would recur that cautious glance behind, and always quickly withdrawn, as though something terrible met his view.

I encountered him frequently afterwards at the theater, at balls, at concerts; at promenades in the gardens of San Georgio;[2] at the grotesque exhibitions in the Square of St. Mark; among the throng of merchants on the exchange by the Rialto.[3] He seemed, in fact, to seek crowds; to hunt after bustle and amusement; yet never to take any interest in either the business or the gayety of the scene. Ever an air of painful thought, of wretched abstraction; and ever that strange and recurring movement of glancing fearfully over the shoulder. I did not know at first but this might be caused by apprehension of arrest; or, perhaps, from dread of assassination. But if so, why should he go thus continually abroad? Why expose himself at all times and in all places?

I became anxious to know this stranger. I was drawn to him by that romantic sympathy which sometimes draws young men towards each other. His melancholy threw a charm about him, no doubt heightened by the touching expression of his counte-

[1] Salvator Rosa was a renowned Italian painter (1615–73) of the Neapolitan school. He had a special skill in depicting strange, wild, turbulent scenes. Sanzio Raphael (1483–1520), an eminent Italian painter, spent much time in decorating churches and altars, and is especially famed for his pictures of the Madonna and the Holy Family. Titian, or Tiziano Vecellio (1477–1576), a celebrated Venetian painter, called "the divine one," excelled chiefly in the depth and beauty of his coloring. Antonio Allegri da Correggio (1494–1534), a great Italian painter, painted many types of female loveliness.

[2] One of the islands in the southern part of Venice, on which is situated the beautiful church of San Georgio Maggiore.

[3] An island on one side of the Grand Canal of Venice. It is the site on which Venice as a city first existed. It is a central point of trade and commerce.

nance, and the manly graces of his person; for manly beauty has its effect even upon men. I had an Englishman's habitual diffidence and awkwardness to contend with; but from frequently meeting him in the cassinos, I gradually edged myself into his acquaintance. I had no reserve on his part to contend with. He seemed, on the contrary, to court society; and, in fact, to seek anything rather than be alone.

When he found that I really took an interest in him, he threw himself entirely on my friendship. He clung to me like a drowning man. He would walk with me for hours up and down the Place of St. Mark; or would sit, until night was far advanced, in my apartments. He took rooms under the same roof with me; and his constant request was that I would permit him, when it did not incommode me, to sit by me in my saloon. It was not that he seemed to take a particular delight in my conversation, but rather that he craved the vicinity of a human being, and, above all, of a being that sympathized with him. "I have often heard," said he, "of the sincerity of Englishmen; thank God I have one at length for a friend!"

Yet he never seemed disposed to avail himself of my sympathy other than by mere companionship. He never sought to unbosom himself to me. There appeared to be a settled, corroding anguish in his bosom that neither could be soothed "by silence nor by speaking."

A devouring melancholy preyed upon his heart, and seemed to be drying up the very blood in his veins. It was not a soft melancholy, the disease of the affections, but a parching, withering agony. I could see at times that his mouth was dry and feverish; he panted rather than breathed; his eyes were bloodshot; his cheeks pale and livid, with now and then faint streaks of red athwart them,—baleful gleams of the fire that was consuming his heart. As my arm was within his, I felt him press it at times with a convulsive motion to his side; his hands would clinch themselves involuntarily, and a kind of shudder would run through his frame.

I reasoned with him about his melancholy; sought to draw from him the cause; he shrunk from all confiding. "Do not seek to know it," said he; "you could not relieve it if you knew it; you would not even seek to relieve it. On the contrary, I should lose your sympathy, and that," said he, pressing my hand convulsively, "that I feel has become too dear to me to risk."

I endeavored to awaken hope within him. He was young; life had a thousand pleasures in store for him; there was a healthy reaction in the youthful heart; it medicines[1] all its own wounds. "Come, come," said I, "there is no grief so great that youth cannot outgrow it." "No! no!" said he, clinching his teeth, and striking repeatedly, with the energy of despair, on his bosom, "it is here! here! deep rooted; draining my heart's blood. It grows and grows, while my heart withers and withers. I have a dreadful monitor that gives me no repose—that follows me step by step—and will follow me step by step, until it pushes me into my grave!"

As he said this he involuntarily gave one of those fearful glances over his shoulder, and shrunk back with more than usual horror. I could not resist the temptation to allude to this movement, which I supposed to be some mere malady of the nerves. The moment I mentioned it, his face became crimsoned and convulsed; he grasped me by both hands.

"For God's sake," exclaimed he, with a piercing voice, "never allude to that again. Let us avoid this subject, my friend; you cannot relieve me,—indeed you cannot relieve me, but you may add to the torments I suffer. At some future day you shall know all."

I never resumed the subject; for however much my curiosity might be roused, I felt too true a compassion for his sufferings to increase them by my intrusion. I sought various ways to divert his mind, and to arouse him from the constant meditations in which he was plunged. He saw my efforts, and seconded them as far as was in his power, for there was nothing moody

[1] Cures.

or wayward in his nature. On the contrary, there was something frank, generous, unassuming, in his whole deportment. All the sentiments he uttered were noble and lofty. He claimed no indulgence, asked no toleration, but seemed content to carry his load of misery in silence, and only sought to carry it by my side. There was a mute, beseeching manner about him, as if he craved companionship as a charitable boon; and a tacit thankfulness in his looks, as if he felt grateful to me for not repulsing him.

I felt this melancholy to be infectious. It stole over my spirits, interfered with all my gay pursuits, and gradually saddened my life; yet I could not prevail upon myself to shake off a being who seemed to hang upon me for support. In truth, the generous traits of character which beamed through all his gloom penetrated to my heart. His bounty was lavish and open-handed; his charity, melting and spontaneous, not confined to mere donations, which humiliate as much as they relieve. The tone of his voice, the beam of his eye, enhanced every gift, and surprised the poor suppliant with that rarest and sweetest of charities, — the charity not merely of the hand, but of the heart. Indeed his liberality seemed to have something in it of self-abasement and expiation. He, in a manner, humbled himself before the mendicant. "What right have I to ease and affluence," would he murmur to himself, "when innocence wanders in misery and rags?"

The carnival[1] time arrived. I hoped the gay scenes then presented might have some cheering effect. I mingled with him in the motley throng that crowded the Place of St. Mark. We frequented operas, masquerades, balls, — all in vain. The evil kept growing on him. He became more and more haggard and agitated. Often, after we had returned from one of these scenes of revelry, I have entered his room and found him lying on his face on the sofa, his hands clinched in his fine hair, and his whole countenance bearing traces of the convulsions of his mind.

The carnival passed away; the time of Lent succeeded; pas-

[1] A festival celebrated with merriment and revelry in Roman Catholic countries during the week before Lent.

sion week arrived. We attended one evening a solemn service in one of the churches, in the course of which a grand piece of vocal and instrumental music was performed relating to the death of our Savior.

I had remarked that he was always powerfully affected by music; on this occasion he was so in an extraordinary degree. As the pealing notes swelled through the lofty aisles, he seemed to kindle with fervor; his eyes rolled upwards, until nothing but the whites were visible; his hands were clasped together, until the fingers were deeply imprinted in the flesh. When the music expressed the dying agony, his face gradually sank upon his knees; and at the touching words resounding through the church, "*Gesu mori*," [1] sobs burst from him uncontrolled. I had never seen him weep before. His had always been agony rather than sorrow. I augured well from the circumstance, and let him weep on uninterrupted. When the service was ended, we left the church. He hung on my arm as we walked homewards, with something of a softer and more subdued manner, instead of that nervous agitation I had been accustomed to witness. He alluded to the service we had heard. "Music," said he, "is indeed the voice of Heaven; never before have I felt more impressed by the story of the atonement of our Savior.—Yes, my friend," said he, clasping his hands with a kind of transport, "I know that my Redeemer liveth!"

We parted for the night. His room was not far from mine, and I heard him for some time busied in it. I fell asleep, but was awakened before daylight. The young man stood by my bedside, dressed for traveling. He held a sealed packet and a large parcel in his hand, which he laid on the table.

"Farewell, my friend," said he, "I am about to set forth on a long journey; but, before I go I leave with you these remembrances. In this packet you will find the particulars of my story. When you read them I shall be far away. Do not remember me with aversion. You have been indeed a friend to me. You

[1] Jesus died.

have poured oil into a broken heart, but you could not heal it. Farewell! Let me kiss your hand—I am unworthy to embrace you." He sank on his knees, seized my hand in despite of my efforts to the contrary, and covered it with kisses. I was so surprised by all the scene that I had not been able to say a word. "But we shall meet again," said I, hastily, as I saw him hurrying towards the door. "Never, never, in this world!" said he, solemnly. He sprang once more to my bedside, seized my hand, pressed it to his heart and to his lips, and rushed out of the room.

Here the Baronet paused. He seemed lost in thought, and sat looking upon the floor, and drumming with his fingers on the arm of his chair.

"And did this mysterious personage return?" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"Never!" replied the Baronet, with a pensive shake of the head; "I never saw him again."

"And pray what has all this to do with the picture?" inquired the old gentleman with the nose.

"True," said the questioner; "is it the portrait of that crack-brained Italian?"

"No," said the Baronet, dryly, not half liking the appellation given to his hero; "but this picture was inclosed in the parcel he left with me. The sealed packet contained its explanation. There was a request on the outside that I would not open it until six months had elapsed. I kept my promise in spite of my curiosity. I have a translation of it by me, and had meant to read it, by way of accounting for the mystery of the chamber; but I fear I have already detained the company too long."

Here there was a general wish expressed to have the manuscript read, particularly on the part of the inquisitive gentleman; so the worthy Baronet drew out a fairly written manuscript, and, wiping his spectacles, read aloud the following story:

THE STORY OF THE YOUNG ITALIAN.

I WAS born at Naples. My parents, though of noble rank, were limited in fortune, or rather, my father was ostentatious beyond his means, and expended so much on his palace, his equipage, and his retinue, that he was continually straitened in his pecuniary circumstances. I was a younger son, and looked upon with indifference by my father, who, from a principle of family pride, wished to leave all his property to my elder brother. I showed, when quite a child, an extreme sensibility. Everything affected me violently. While yet an infant in my mother's arms, and before I had learned to talk, I could be wrought upon to a wonderful degree of anguish or delight by the power of music. As I grew older, my feelings remained equally acute, and I was easily transported into paroxysms of pleasure or rage. It was the amusement of my relations and of the domestics to play upon[1] this irritable temperament. I was moved to tears, tickled to laughter, provoked to fury, for the entertainment of company, who were amused by such a tempest of mighty passion in a pigmy frame. They little thought, or perhaps little heeded, the dangerous sensibilities they were fostering. I thus became a little creature of passion before reason was developed. In a short time I grew too old to be a plaything, and then I became a torment. The tricks and passions I had been teased into became irksome, and I was disliked by my teachers for the very lessons they had taught me. My mother died; and my power as a spoiled child was at an end. There was no longer any necessity to humor or tolerate me, for there was nothing to be gained by it, as I was no favorite of my father. I therefore experienced the fate of a spoiled child in such a situation, and was neglected, or noticed only to be crossed and contradicted. Such was the early treatment of a heart which, if I can judge of

[1] "Play upon," i.e., make sport of.

it at all, was naturally disposed to the extremes of tenderness and affection.

My father, as I have already said, never liked me,—in fact, he never understood me; he looked upon me as willful and wayward, as deficient in natural affection. It was the stateliness of his own manner, the loftiness and grandeur of his own look, which had repelled me from his arms. I always pictured him to myself as I had seen him, clad in his senatorial robes, rustling with pomp and pride. The magnificence of his person daunted my young imagination. I could never approach him with the confiding affection of a child.

My father's feelings were wrapped up in my elder brother. He was to be the inheritor of the family title and the family dignity, and everything was sacrificed to him,—I, as well as everything else. It was determined to devote me to the Church, that so my humors and myself might be removed out of the way either of tasking my father's time and trouble, or interfering with the interests of my brother. At an early age, therefore, before my mind had dawned upon the world and its delights, or known anything of it beyond the precincts of my father's palace, I was sent to a convent, the superior of which was my uncle, and was confided entirely to his care.

My uncle was a man totally estranged from the world; he had never relished, for he had never tasted, its pleasures; and he regarded rigid self-denial as the great basis of Christian virtue. He considered every one's temperament like his own, or at least he made them conform to it. His character and habits had an influence over the fraternity of which he was superior; a more gloomy, saturnine set of beings were never assembled together. The convent, too, was calculated to awaken sad and solitary thoughts. It was situated in a gloomy gorge of those mountains away south of Vesuvius. All distant views were shut out by sterile volcanic heights. A mountain stream raved beneath its walls, and eagles screamed about its turrets.

I had been sent to this place at so tender an age as soon to

lose all distinct recollection of the scenes I had left behind. As my mind expanded, therefore, it formed its idea of the world from the convent and its vicinity, and a dreary world it appeared to me. An early tinge of melancholy was thus infused into my character; and the dismal stories of the monks, about devils and evil spirits, with which they affrighted my young imagination, gave me a tendency to superstition which I could never effectually shake off. They took the same delight to work upon my ardent feelings, that had been so mischievously executed by my father's household. I can recollect the horrors with which they fed my heated fancy during an eruption of Vesuvius. We were distant from that volcano, with mountains between us; but its convulsive throes shook the solid foundations of nature. Earthquakes threatened to topple down our convent towers. A lurid, baleful light hung in the heavens at night, and showers of ashes, borne by the wind, fell in our narrow valley. The monks talked of the earth being honeycombed beneath us; of streams of molten lava raging through its veins; of caverns of sulphurous flames roaring in the center, the abodes of demons and the damned; of fiery gulfs ready to yawn beneath our feet. All these tales were told to the doleful accompaniment of the mountain's thunders, whose low bellowing made the walls of our convent vibrate.

One of the monks had been a painter, but had retired from the world, and embraced this dismal life in expiation of some crime. He was a melancholy man, who pursued his art in the solitude of his cell, but made it a source of penance to him. His employment was to portray, either on canvas or in waxen models, the human face and human form, in the agonies of death, and in all the stages of dissolution and decay. The fearful mysteries of the charnel house were unfolded in his labors; the loathsome banquet of the beetle and the worm. I turn with shuddering even from the recollection of his works; yet, at the time, my strong but ill-directed imagination seized with ardor upon his instructions in his art. Anything was a variety from the dry studies and monotonous duties of the cloister. In a lit-

tle while I became expert with my pencil, and my gloomy productions were thought worthy of decorating some of the altars of the chapel.

In this dismal way was a creature of feeling and fancy brought up. Everything genial and amiable in my nature was repressed, and nothing brought out but what was unprofitable and ungracious. I was ardent in my temperament; quick, mercurial,[1] impetuous, formed to be a creature all love and adoration; but a leaden hand was laid on all my finer qualities. I was taught nothing but fear and hatred. I hated my uncle; I hated the monks; I hated the convent in which I was immured; I hated the world; and I almost hated myself for being, as I supposed, so hating and hateful an animal.

When I had nearly attained the age of sixteen, I was suffered, on one occasion, to accompany one of the brethren on a mission to a distant part of the country. We soon left behind us the gloomy valley in which I had been pent up for so many years, and after a short journey among the mountains, emerged upon the voluptuous landscape that spreads itself about the Bay of Naples. Heavens! how transported was I when I stretched my gaze over a vast reach of delicious sunny country, gay with groves and vineyards; with Vesuvius rearing its forked summit to my right, the blue Mediterranean to my left, with its enchanting coast, studded with shining towns and sumptuous villas, and Naples, my native Naples, gleaming far, far in the distance.

Good God! was this the lovely world from which I had been excluded! I had reached that age when the sensibilities are in all their bloom and freshness. Mine had been checked and chilled. They now burst forth with the suddenness of a retarded springtime. My heart, hitherto unnaturally shrunk up, expanded into a riot of vague but delicious emotions. The beauty of nature intoxicated — bewildered me. The song of the peasants, their cheerful looks, their happy avocations, the pic-

[1] Changeable.

turesque gayety of their dresses, their rustic music, their dances,—all broke upon me like witchcraft. My soul responded to the music, my heart danced in my bosom. All the men appeared amiable, all the women lovely.

I returned to the convent, that is to say, my body returned, but my heart and soul never entered there again. I could not forget this glimpse of a beautiful and a happy world,—a world so suited to my natural character. I had felt so happy while in it; so different a being from what I felt myself when in the convent, that tomb of the living. I contrasted the countenances of the beings I had seen, full of fire and freshness and enjoyment, with the pallid, leaden, lackluster visages of the monks; the dance, with the droning chant of the chapel. I had before found the exercises of the cloister wearisome; they now became intolerable. The dull round of duties wore away my spirit; my nerves became irritated by the fretful tinkling of the convent bell, evermore dinging among the mountain echoes, evermore calling me from my repose at night, my pencil by day, to attend to some tedious and mechanical ceremony of devotion.

I was not of a nature to meditate long without putting my thoughts into action. My spirit had been suddenly aroused, and was now all awake within me. I watched an opportunity, fled from the convent, and made my way on foot to Naples. As I entered its gay and crowded streets, and beheld the variety and stir of life around me, the luxury of palaces, the splendor of equipages, and the pantomimic animation of the motley populace, I seemed as if awakened to a world of enchantment, and solemnly vowed that nothing should force me back to the monotony of the cloister.

I had to inquire my way to my father's palace, for I had been so young on leaving it that I knew not its situation. I found some difficulty in getting admitted to my father's presence; for the domestics scarcely knew that there was such a being as myself in existence, and my monastic dress did not operate in my favor. Even my father entertained no recollection of my per-

son. I told him my name, threw myself at his feet, implored his forgiveness, and entreated that I might not be sent back to the convent.

He received me with the condescension of a patron, rather than the fondness of a parent; listened patiently, but coldly, to my tale of monastic grievances and disgusts, and promised to think what else could be done for me. This coldness blighted and drove back all the frank affection of my nature, that was ready to spring forth at the least warmth of parental kindness. All my early feelings towards my father revived. I again looked up to him as the stately, magnificent being that had daunted my childish imagination, and felt as if I had no pretensions to his sympathies. My brother engrossed all his care and love; he inherited his nature, and carried himself towards me with a protecting rather than a fraternal air. It wounded my pride, which was great. I could brook condescension from my father, for I looked up to him with awe, as a superior being; but I could not brook patronage from a brother, who I felt was intellectually my inferior. The servants perceived that I was an unwelcome intruder in the paternal mansion, and, menial like, they treated me with neglect. Thus baffled at every point, my affections outraged wherever they would attach themselves, I became sullen, silent, and desponding. My feelings, driven back upon myself, entered and preyed upon my own heart. I remained for some days an unwelcome guest rather than a restored son in my father's house. I was doomed never to be properly known there. I was made, by wrong treatment, strange even to myself, and they judged of me from my strangeness.

I was startled one day at the sight of one of the monks of my convent gliding out of my father's room. He saw me, but pretended not to notice me, and this very hypocrisy made me suspect something. I had become sore and susceptible in my feelings; everything inflicted a wound on them. In this state of mind, I was treated with marked disrespect by a pampered minion, the favorite servant of my father. All the pride and passion

of my nature rose in an instant, and I struck him to the earth. My father was passing by; he stopped not to inquire the reason, nor indeed could he read the long course of mental sufferings which were the real cause. He rebuked me with anger and scorn, summoning all the haughtiness of his nature and grandeur of his look to give weight to the contumely with which he treated me. I felt that I had not deserved it. I felt that I was not appreciated. I felt that I had that within me which merited better treatment. My heart swelled against a father's injustice. I broke through my habitual awe of him; I replied to him with impatience. My hot spirit flushed in my cheek and kindled in my eye; but my sensitive heart swelled as quickly, and before I had half vented my passion, I felt it suffocated and quenched in my tears. My father was astonished and incensed at this turning of the worm, and ordered me to my chamber. I retired in silence, choking with contending emotions.

I had not been long there when I overheard voices in an adjoining apartment. It was a consultation between my father and the monk, about the means of getting me back quietly to the convent. My resolution was taken. I had no longer a home nor a father. That very night I left the paternal roof. I got on board a vessel about making sail from the harbor, and abandoned myself to the wide world. No matter to what port she steered; any part of so beautiful a world was better than my convent. No matter where I was cast by fortune; any place would be more a home to me than the home I had left behind. The vessel was bound to Genoa. We arrived there after a voyage of a few days.

As I entered the harbor between the moles which embrace it, and beheld the amphitheater of palaces, and churches, and splendid gardens, rising one above another, I felt at once its title to the appellation of "Genoa the Superb." I landed on the mole, an utter stranger, without knowing what to do, or whither to direct my steps. No matter; I was released from the thraldom of the convent and the humiliations of home. When I traversed the

Strada Balbi[1] and the Strada Nuova,[1] those streets of palaces, and gazed at the wonders of architecture around me; when I wandered at close of day amid a gay throng of the brilliant and the beautiful, through the green alleys of the Acquaverde,[2] or among the colonnades and terraces of the magnificent Doria gardens,[3] I thought it impossible to be ever otherwise than happy in Genoa. A few days sufficed to show me my mistake. My scanty purse was exhausted, and for the first time in my life I experienced the sordid distress of penury. I had never known the want of money, and had never adverted to the possibility of such an evil. I was ignorant of the world and all its ways; and when first the idea of destitution came over my mind, its effect was withering. I was wandering penniless through the streets which no longer delighted my eyes, when chance led my steps into the magnificent Church of the Annunciata.[4]

A celebrated painter of the day was at that moment superintending the placing of one of his pictures over an altar. The proficiency which I had acquired in his art during my residence in the convent, had made me an enthusiastic amateur. I was struck, at the first glance, with the painting. It was the face of a Madonna, so innocent, so lovely, such a divine expression of maternal tenderness! I lost, for the moment, all recollection of myself in the enthusiasm of my art. I clasped my hands together, and uttered an ejaculation of delight. The painter perceived my emotion. He was flattered and gratified by it. My air and manner pleased him, and he accosted me. I felt too much the want of friendship to repel the advances of a stranger;

[1] A fine street in the newer part of Genoa, containing palaces of superb architecture.

[2] The Piazza Acquaverde is a square in Genoa, now noted for the fine statue of Columbus, erected in 1862.

[3] The gardens of the Palace of Doria, presented to Andrea Doria, a Genoese statesman, in 1522. These gardens are very beautiful, and are famous for their fine orange trees.

[4] A church erected in 1487. In its interior it is the most magnificent in Genoa. The dome is richly decorated with works of art.

and there was something in this one so benevolent and winning, that in a moment he gained my confidence.

I told him my story and my situation, concealing only my name and rank. He appeared strongly interested by my recital, invited me to his house, and from that time I became his favorite pupil. He thought he perceived in me extraordinary talents for the art, and his encomiums awakened all my ardor. What a blissful period of my existence was it that I passed beneath his roof! Another being seemed created within me, or rather, all that was amiable and excellent was drawn out. I was as recluse as ever I had been at the convent, but how different was my seclusion! My time was spent in storing my mind with lofty and poetical ideas; in meditating on all that was striking and noble in history and fiction; in studying and tracing all that was sublime and beautiful in nature. I was always a visionary, imaginative being, but now my reveries and imaginings all elevated me to rapture. I looked up to my master as to a benevolent genius that had opened to me a region of enchantment. He was not a native of Genoa, but had been drawn thither by the solicitations of several of the nobility, and had resided there but a few years, for the completion of certain works. His health was delicate, and he had to confide much of the filling up of his designs to the pencils of his scholars. He considered me as particularly happy[1] in delineating the human countenance; in seizing upon characteristic though fleeting expressions, and fixing them powerfully upon my canvas. I was employed continually, therefore, in sketching faces, and often, when some particular grace or beauty of expression was wanted in a countenance, it was intrusted to my pencil. My benefactor was fond of bringing me forward; and partly, perhaps, through my actual skill, and partly through his partial praises, I began to be noted for the expressions of my countenances.

Among the various works which he had undertaken, was an historical piece for one of the palaces of Genoa, in which were

[1] Successful.

to be introduced the likenesses of several of the family. Among these was one intrusted to my pencil. It was that of a young girl, as yet in a convent for her education. She came out for the purpose of sitting for the picture. I first saw her in an apartment of one of the sumptuous palaces of Genoa. She stood before a casement that looked out upon the bay; a stream of vernal sunshine fell upon her, and shed a kind of glory round her, as it lit up the rich crimson chamber. She was but sixteen years of age—and oh, how lovely! The scene broke upon me like a mere vision of spring and youth and beauty. I could have fallen down and worshiped her. She was like one of those fictions of poets and painters, when they would express the *beau ideal* that haunts their minds with shapes of indescribable perfection. I was permitted to watch her countenance in various positions, and I fondly protracted the study that was undoing me. The more I gazed on her, the more I became enamored; there was something almost painful in my intense admiration. I was but nineteen years of age, shy, diffident, and inexperienced. I was treated with attention by her mother; for my youth and my enthusiasm in my art had won favor for me, and I am inclined to think something in my air and manner inspired interest and respect. Still the kindness with which I was treated could not dispel the embarrassment into which my own imagination threw me when in the presence of this lovely being. It elevated her into something almost more than mortal. She seemed too exquisite for earthly use, too delicate and exalted for human attainment. As I sat tracing her charms on my canvas, with my eyes occasionally riveted on her features, I drank in delicious poison that made me giddy. My heart alternately gushed with tenderness, and ached with despair. Now I became more than ever sensible of the violent fires that had lain dormant at the bottom of my soul. You who were born in a more temperate climate, and under a cooler sky, have little idea of the violence of passion in our southern bosoms.

A few days finished my task. Bianca returned to her convent,

but her image remained indelibly impressed upon my heart. It dwelt in my imagination; it became my pervading idea of beauty. It had an effect even upon my pencil. I became noted for my felicity in depicting female loveliness. It was but because I multiplied the image of Bianca. I soothed and yet fed my fancy by introducing her in all the productions of my master. I have stood with delight in one of the chapels of the Annunciata, and heard the crowd extol the seraphic beauty of a saint which I had painted. I have seen them bow down in adoration before the painting. They were bowing before the loveliness of Bianca.

I existed in this kind of dream — I might almost say delirium — for upwards of a year. Such is the tenacity of my imagination, that the image formed in it continued in all its power and freshness. Indeed, I was a solitary, meditative being, much given to reverie, and apt to foster ideas which had once taken strong possession of me. I was roused from this fond, melancholy, delicious dream by the death of my worthy benefactor. I cannot describe the pangs his death occasioned me. It left me alone, and almost broken-hearted. He bequeathed to me his little property, which, from the liberality of his disposition, and his expensive style of living, was indeed but small; and he most particularly recommended me, in dying, to the protection of a nobleman who had been his patron.

The latter was a man who passed for munificent. He was a lover and an encourager of the arts, and evidently wished to be thought so. He fancied he saw in me indications of future excellence; my pencil had already attracted attention; he took me at once under his protection. Seeing that I was overwhelmed with grief, and incapable of exerting myself in the mansion of my late benefactor, he invited me to sojourn for a time at a villa which he possessed on the border of the sea, in the picturesque neighborhood of Sestri di Ponente.[1]

I found at the villa the count's only son, Filippo. He was near-

[1] A maritime town of Italy, four miles west of Genoa, having many country residences of the Genoese citizens.

ly of my age, prepossessing in his appearance, and fascinating in his manners; he attached himself to me, and seemed to court my good opinion. I thought there was something of profession in his kindness, and of caprice in his disposition; but I had nothing else near me to attach myself to, and my heart felt the need of something to repose upon. His education had been neglected; he looked upon me as his superior in mental powers and acquirements, and tacitly acknowledged my superiority. I felt that I was his equal in birth, and that gave independence to my manners, which had its effect. The caprice and tyranny I saw sometimes exercised on others over whom he had power, were never manifested towards me. We became intimate friends and frequent companions. Still, I loved to be alone, and to indulge in the reveries of my own imagination among the scenery by which I was surrounded. The villa commanded a wide view of the Mediterranean, and of the picturesque Ligurian coast.[1] It stood alone in the midst of ornamented grounds, finely decorated with statues and fountains, and laid out in groves and alleys and shady lawns. Everything was assembled here that could gratify the taste or agreeably occupy the mind. Soothed by the tranquillity of this elegant retreat, the turbulence of my feelings gradually subsided, and blending with the romantic spell which still reigned over my imagination, produced a soft, voluptuous melancholy.

I had not been long under the roof of the count when our solitude was enlivened by another inhabitant. It was a daughter of a relative of the count, who had lately died in reduced circumstances, bequeathing this only child to his protection. I had heard much of her beauty from Filippo, but my fancy had become so engrossed by one idea of beauty as not to admit of any other. We were in the central saloon of the villa when she arrived. She was still in mourning, and approached, leaning on the count's arm. As they ascended the marble portico, I was struck by the elegance of her figure and movement, by the grace

[1] Liguria, a mountainous region of Italy, comprising the provinces of Genoa and Porto Maurizio.

with which the *mezzaxo*, the bewitching veil of Genoa, was folded about her slender form. They entered. Heavens! what was my surprise when I beheld Bianca before me! It was herself, pale with grief, but still more matured in loveliness than when I had last beheld her. The time that had elapsed had developed the graces of her person, and the sorrow she had undergone had diffused over her countenance an irresistible tenderness.

She blushed and trembled at seeing me, and tears rushed into her eyes, for she remembered in whose company she had been accustomed to behold me. For my part, I cannot express what were my emotions. By degrees I overcame the extreme shyness that had formerly paralyzed me in her presence. We were drawn together by sympathy of situation. We had each lost our best friend in the world; we were each, in some measure, thrown upon the kindness of others. When I came to know her intellectually, all my ideal picturings of her were confirmed. Her newness to the world, her delightful susceptibility to everything beautiful and agreeable in nature, reminded me of my own emotions when first I escaped from the convent. Her rectitude of thinking delighted my judgment; the sweetness of her nature wrapped itself round my heart; and then her young, and tender, and budding loveliness sent a delicious madness to my brain.

I gazed upon her with a kind of idolatry, as something more than mortal; and I felt humiliated at the idea of my comparative unworthiness. Yet she was mortal; and one of mortality's most susceptible and loving compounds,—for she loved me!

How first I discovered the transporting truth I cannot recollect. I believe it stole upon me by degrees, as a wonder past hope or belief. We were both at such a tender and loving age, in constant intercourse with each other, mingling in the same elegant pursuits, for music, poetry, and painting were our mutual delights, and we were almost separated from society among lovely and romantic scenery. Is it strange that two young hearts thus brought together should readily twine round each other?

O gods! what a dream — a transient dream of unalloyed delight — then passed over my soul! Then it was that the world around me was indeed a paradise; for I had woman — lovely, delicious woman — to share it with me! How often have I rambled along the picturesque shores of Sestri, or climbed its wild mountains, with the coast gemmed with villas, and the blue sea far below me, and the slender Faro[1] of Genoa on its romantic promontory[2] in the distance; and as I sustained the faltering steps of Bianca, have thought there could no unhappiness enter into so beautiful a world! How often have we listened together to the nightingale, as it poured forth its rich notes among the moonlight bowers of the garden, and have wondered that poets could ever have fancied anything melancholy in its song! Why, oh why, is this budding season of life and tenderness so transient! Why is this rosy cloud of love, that sheds such a glow over the morning of our days, so prone to brew up into the whirlwind and the storm!

I was the first to awaken from this blissful delirium of the affections. I had gained Bianca's heart — what was I to do with it? I had no wealth nor prospect to entitle me to her hand. Was I to take advantage of her ignorance of the world, of her confiding affection, and draw her down to my own poverty? Was this requiting the hospitality of the count? Was this requiting the love of Bianca?

Now first I began to feel that even successful love may have its bitterness. A corroding care gathered about my heart. I moved about the palace like a guilty being. I felt as if I had abused its hospitality, as if I were a thief within its walls. I could no longer look with unembarrassed mien in the countenance of the count. I accused myself of perfidy to him, and I thought he read it in my looks and began to distrust and despise me. His manner had always been ostentatious and condescend-

[1] The lighthouse of Genoa; a beautiful structure, three hundred feet high.

[2] Cape Faro, in the southern extremity of Genoa, on a slender piece of land.

ing; it now appeared cold and haughty. Filippo, too, became reserved and distant, or at least I suspected him to be so. Heavens! was this the mere coinage of my brain? Was I to become suspicious of all the world? a poor, surmising wretch, watching looks and gestures, and torturing myself with misconstructions? Or, if true, was I to remain beneath a roof where I was merely tolerated, and linger there on sufferance? "This is not to be endured!" exclaimed I. "I will tear myself from this state of self-abasement; I will break through this fascination, and fly—Fly! —whither? from the world? for where is the world when I leave Bianca behind me?"

My spirit was naturally proud, and swelled within me at the idea of being looked upon with contumely. Many times I was on the point of declaring my family and rank, and asserting my equality in the presence of Bianca, when I thought her relations assumed an air of superiority. But the feeling was transient. I considered myself discarded and condemned by my family, and had solemnly vowed never to own relationship to them until they themselves should claim it.

The struggle of my mind preyed upon my happiness and my health. It seemed as if the uncertainty of being loved would be less intolerable than thus to be assured of it, and yet not dare to enjoy the conviction. I was no longer the enraptured admirer of Bianca; I no longer hung in ecstasy on the tones of her voice, nor drank in with insatiate gaze the beauty of her countenance. Her very smiles ceased to delight me, for I felt culpable in having won them.

She could not but be sensible of the change in me, and inquired the cause with her usual frankness and simplicity. I could not evade the inquiry, for my heart was full to aching. I told her all the conflict of my soul, my devouring passion, my bitter self-upbraiding. "Yes," said I, "I am unworthy of you. I am an offcast from my family,—a wanderer,—a nameless, homeless wanderer, with nothing but poverty for my portion; and yet I have dared to love you—have dared to aspire to your love."

My agitation moved her to tears, but she saw nothing in my situation so hopeless as I had depicted it. Brought up in a convent, she knew nothing of the world,—its wants, its cares; and indeed, what woman is a worldly casuist in the matters of the heart? Nay, more, she kindled into sweet enthusiasm when she spoke of my fortunes and myself. We had dwelt together on the works of the famous masters. I related to her their histories, the high reputation, the influence, the magnificence to which they had attained,—the companions of princes, the favorites of kings, the pride and boast of nations. All this she applied to me. Her love saw nothing in all their great productions that I was not able to achieve; and when I beheld the lovely creature glow with fervor, and her whole countenance radiant with visions of my glory, I was snatched up for the moment into the heaven of her own imagination.

I am dwelling too long upon this part of my story, yet I cannot help lingering over a period of my life on which, with all its cares and conflicts, I look back with fondness, for as yet my soul was unstained by a crime. I do not know what might have been the result of this struggle between pride, delicacy, and passion, had I not read in a Neapolitan gazette an account of the sudden death of my brother. It was accompanied by an earnest inquiry for intelligence concerning me, and a prayer, should this meet my eye, that I would hasten to Naples to comfort an infirm and afflicted father.

I was naturally of an affectionate disposition, but my brother had never been as a brother to me. I had long considered myself as disconnected from him, and his death caused me but little emotion. The thoughts of my father, infirm and suffering, touched me, however, to the quick, and when I thought of him, that lofty, magnificent being, now bowed down and desolate, and suing to me for comfort, all my resentment for past neglect was subdued, and a glow of filial affection was awakened within me.

The predominant feeling, however, that overpowered all others,

was transport at the sudden change in my whole fortunes. A home, a name, rank, wealth, awaited me; and love painted a still more rapturous prospect in the distance. I hastened to Bianca, and threw myself at her feet. "O Bianca!" exclaimed I, "at length I can claim you for my own. I am no longer a nameless adventurer, a neglected, rejected outcast. Look—read—behold the tidings that restore me to my name and to myself!"

I will not dwell on the scene that ensued. Bianca rejoiced in the reverse of my situation, because she saw it lightened my heart of a load of care; for her own part, she had loved me for myself, and had never doubted that my own merits would command both fame and fortune.

I now felt all my native pride buoyant within me. I no longer walked with my eyes bent to the dust; hope elevated them to the skies; my soul was lit up with fresh fires, and beamed from my countenance.

I wished to impart the change in my circumstances to the count, to let him know who and what I was, and to make formal proposals for the hand of Bianca; but he was absent on a distant estate. I opened my whole soul to Filippo. Now first I told him of my passion, of the doubts and fears that had distracted me, and of the tidings that had suddenly dispelled them. He overwhelmed me with congratulations, and with the warmest expressions of sympathy. I embraced him in the fullness of my heart; I felt compunctious for having suspected him of coldness, and asked his forgiveness for ever having doubted his friendship.

Nothing is so warm and enthusiastic as a sudden expansion of the heart between young men. Filippo entered into our concerns with the most eager interest. He was our confidant and counselor. It was determined that I should hasten at once to Naples, to reëstablish myself in my father's affections and my paternal home; and the moment the reconciliation was effected, and my father's consent insured, I should return and demand Bianca of the count. Filippo engaged to secure his father's

acquiescence; indeed he undertook to watch over our interest, and to be the channel through which we might correspond.

My parting with Bianca was tender, delicious, agonizing. It was in a little pavilion of the garden which had been one of our favorite resorts. How often and often did I return to have one more adieu; to have her look once more on me in speechless emotion; to enjoy once more the rapturous sight of those tears streaming down her lovely cheeks; to seize once more on that delicate hand, the frankly accorded pledge of love, and cover it with tears and kisses! Heavens! there is a delight even in the parting agony of two lovers worth a thousand tame pleasures of the world. I have her at this moment before my eyes, at the window of the pavilion, putting aside the vines which clustered about the casement, her form beaming forth in virgin light, her countenance all tears and smiles, sending a thousand and a thousand adieus after me, as, hesitating in a delirium of fondness and agitation, I faltered my way down the avenue.

As the bark bore me out of the harbor of Genoa, how eagerly my eye stretched along the coast of Sestri till it discovered the villa gleaming from among the trees at the foot of the mountain. As long as day lasted I gazed and gazed upon it, till it lessened and lessened to a mere white speck in the distance; and still my intense and fixed gaze discerned it, when all other objects of the coast had blended into indistinct confusion, or were lost in the evening gloom.

On arriving at Naples, I hastened to my paternal home. My heart yearned for the long withheld blessing of a father's love. As I entered the proud portal of the ancestral palace, my emotions were so great that I could not speak. No one knew me; the servants gazed at me with curiosity and surprise. A few years of intellectual elevation and development had made a prodigious change in the poor fugitive stripling from the convent. Still, that no one should know me in my rightful home was overpowering. I felt like the prodigal son returned. I was a stranger in the house of my father. I burst into tears and wept aloud.

When I made myself known, however, all was changed. I, who had once been almost repulsed from its walls, and forced to fly as an exile, was welcomed back with acclamation, with servility. One of the servants hastened to prepare my father for my reception. My eagerness to receive the paternal embrace was so great that I could not await his return, but hurried after him. What a spectacle met my eyes as I entered the chamber! My father, whom I had left in the pride of vigorous age, whose noble and majestic bearing had so awed my young imagination, was bowed down and withered into decrepitude. A paralysis had ravaged his stately form, and left it a shaking ruin. He sat propped up in his chair, with pale, relaxed visage, and glassy, wandering eye. His intellect had evidently shared in the ravages of his frame. The servant was endeavoring to make him comprehend that a visitor was at hand. I tottered up to him, and sank at his feet. All his past coldness and neglect were forgotten in his present sufferings. I remembered only that he was my parent, and that I had deserted him. I clasped his knee; my voice was almost filled with convulsive sobs. "Pardon—pardon! O my father!" was all that I could utter. His apprehension seemed slowly to return to him. He gazed at me for some moments with a vague, inquiring look, a convulsive tremor quivered about his lips, he feebly extended a shaking hand, laid it upon my head, and burst into an infantine flow of tears.

From that moment he would scarcely spare me from his sight. I appeared the only object that his heart responded to in the world; all else was as a blank to him. He had almost lost the power of speech, and the reasoning faculty seemed at an end. He was mute and passive, excepting that fits of childlike weeping would sometimes come over him without any immediate cause. If I left the room at any time, his eye was incessantly fixed on the door till my return, and on my entrance there was another gush of tears.

To talk with him of all my concerns, in this ruined state of mind, would have been worse than useless; to have left him for

ever so short a time would have been cruel, unnatural. Here, then, was a new trial for my affections. I wrote to Bianca an account of my return, and of my actual situation, painting in colors vivid, for they were true, the torments I suffered at our being thus separated; for the youthful lover every day of absence is an age of love lost. I inclosed the letter in one to Filippo, who was the channel of our correspondence. I received a reply from him full of friendship and sympathy, from Bianca, full of assurances of affection and constancy. Week after week, month after month elapsed without making any change in my circumstances. The vital flame which had seemed nearly extinct when first I met my father, kept fluttering on without any apparent diminution. I watched him constantly, faithfully, I had almost said patiently. I knew that his death alone would set me free, yet I never at any moment wished it. I felt too glad to be able to make any atonement for past disobedience; and denied, as I had been, all endearments of relationship in my early days, my heart yearned towards a father who in his age and helplessness had thrown himself entirely on me for comfort.

My passion for Bianca gained daily more force from absence; by constant meditation it wore itself a deeper and deeper channel. I made no new friends nor acquaintances, sought none of the pleasures of Naples which my rank and fortune threw open to me. Mine was a heart that confined itself to few objects, but dwelt upon them with the intenser passion. To sit by my father, administer to his wants, and to meditate on Bianca in the silence of his chamber, was my constant habit. Sometimes I amused myself with my pencil in portraying the image ever present to my imagination. I transferred to canvas every look and smile of hers that dwelt in my heart. I showed them to my father, in hopes of awakening an interest in his bosom for the mere shadow of my love; but he was too far sunk in intellect to take any notice of them. When I received a letter from Bianca, it was a new source of solitary luxury. Her letters, it is true, were less and less frequent, but they were always full of assurances of unabated

affection. They breathed not the frank and innocent warmth with which she expressed herself in conversation, but I accounted for it from the embarrassment which inexperienced minds have often to express themselves upon paper. Filippo assured me of her unaltered constancy. They both lamented, in the strongest terms, our continued separation, though they did justice to the filial piety that kept me by my father's side.

Nearly two years elapsed in this protracted exile. To me they were so many ages. Ardent and impetuous by nature, I scarcely know how I should have supported so long an absence had I not felt assured that the faith of Bianca was equal to my own. At length my father died. Life went from him almost imperceptibly. I hung over him in mute affliction, and watched the expiring spasms of nature. His last faltering accents whispered repeatedly a blessing on me. Alas! how has it been fulfilled!

When I had paid due honors to his remains, and laid them in the tomb of our ancestors, I arranged briefly my affairs, put them in a posture to be easily at my command from a distance, and embarked once more with a bounding heart for Genoa.

Our voyage was propitious, and oh, what was my rapture when first, in the dawn of morning, I saw the shadowy summits of the Apennines rising almost like clouds above the horizon! The sweet breath of summer just moved us over the long wavering billows that were rolling us on towards Genoa. By degrees the coast of Sestri rose like a creation of enchantment from the silver bosom of the deep. I beheld the line of villages and palaces studding its borders. My eye reverted to a well-known point, and at length, from the confusion of distant objects, it singled out the villa which contained Bianca. It was a mere speck in the landscape, but glimmering from afar, the polar star of my heart.

Again I gazed at it for a livelong summer's day, but oh, how different the emotions between departure and return! It now kept growing and growing, instead of lessening and lessening, on my sight. My heart seemed to dilate with it. I looked at it

through a telescope. I gradually defined one feature after another. The balconies of the second saloon where first I met Bianca beneath its roof; the terrace where we so often had passed the delightful summer evenings; the awning which shaded her chamber window; I almost fancied I saw her form beneath it. Could she but know her lover was in the bark whose white sail now gleamed on the sunny bosom of the sea! My fond impatience increased as we neared the coast; the ship seemed to lag lazily over the billows; I could almost have sprung into the sea, and swum to the desired shore.

The shadows of evening gradually shrouded the scene, but the moon arose in all her fullness and beauty, and shed the tender light so dear to lovers over the romantic coast of Sestri. My soul was bathed in unutterable tenderness. I anticipated the heavenly evenings I should pass in once more wandering with Bianca by the light of that blessed moon.

It was late at night before we entered the harbor. As early next morning as I could get released from the formalities of landing, I threw myself on horseback, and hastened to the villa. As I galloped round the rocky promontory on which stands the Faro, and saw the coast of Sestri opening upon me, a thousand anxieties and doubts suddenly sprang up in my bosom. There is something fearful in returning to those we love, while yet uncertain what ills or changes absence may have effected. The turbulence of my agitation shook my very frame. I spurred my horse to redoubled speed; he was covered with foam when we both arrived panting at the gateway that opened to the grounds around the villa. I left my horse at a cottage, and walked through the grounds, that I might regain tranquillity for the approaching interview. I chid myself for having suffered mere doubts and surmises thus suddenly to overcome me; but I was always prone to be carried away by gusts of the feelings.

On entering the garden, everything bore the same look as when I had left it; and this unchanged aspect of things reassured me. There were the alleys in which I had so often walked

with Bianca, as we listened to the song of the nightingale; the same shades under which we had so often sat during the noon-tide heat. There were the same flowers of which she was so fond, and which appeared still to be under the ministry of her hand. Everything looked and breathed of Bianca; hope and joy flushed in my bosom at every step. I passed a little arbor, in which we had often sat and read together; a book and glove lay on the bench; it was Bianca's glove; it was a volume of the "Metastasio"[1] I had given her. The glove lay in my favorite passage. I clasped them to my heart with rapture. "All is safe!" exclaimed I; "she loves me, she is still my own!"

I bounded lightly along the avenue down which I had faltered slowly at my departure. I beheld her favorite pavilion, which had witnessed our parting scene. The window was open, with the same vine clambering about it, precisely as when she waved and wept me an adieu. Oh, how transporting was the contrast in my situation! As I passed near the pavilion, I heard the tones of a female voice; they thrilled through me with an appeal to my heart not to be mistaken. Before I could think, I *felt* they were Bianca's. For an instant I paused, overpowered with agitation. I feared to break so suddenly upon her. I softly ascended the steps of the pavilion. The door was open. I saw Bianca seated at a table; her back was towards me; she was warbling a soft, melancholy air, and was occupied in drawing. A glance sufficed to show me that she was copying one of my own paintings. I gazed on her for a moment in a delicious tumult of emotions. She paused in her singing: a heavy sigh, almost a sob, followed. I could no longer contain myself. "Bianca!" exclaimed I, in a half-smothered voice. She started at the sound, brushed back the ringlets that hung clustering about her face, darted a glance at me, uttered a piercing shriek, and would have fallen to the earth had I not caught her in my arms.

[1] A famous Italian poet (1698–1782). His real name was Trapassi, which was changed to Metastasio ("a changing") on his adoption by the jurist Gravina.

"Bianca! my own Bianca!" exclaimed I, folding her to my bosom, my voice stifled in sobs of convulsive joy. She lay in my arms without sense or motion. Alarmed at the effects of my precipitation, I scarce knew what to do. I tried by a thousand endearing words to call her back to consciousness. She slowly recovered, and half opened her eyes. "Where am I?" murmured she faintly. "Here!" exclaimed I, pressing her to my bosom, "here—close to the heart that adores you—in the arms of your faithful Ottavio!" "Oh, no! no! no!" shrieked she, starting into sudden life and terror. "Away! away! leave me! leave me!"

She tore herself from my arms, rushed to a corner of the saloon, and covered her face with her hands, as if the very sight of me were baleful. I was thunderstruck. I could not believe my senses. I followed her, trembling, confounded. I endeavored to take her hand, but she shrunk from my very touch with horror.

"Good heavens, Bianca!" exclaimed I, "what is the meaning of this? Is this my reception after so long an absence? Is this the love you professed for me?"

At the mention of love, a shuddering ran through her. She turned to me a face wild with anguish. "No more of that—no more of that!" gasped she; "talk not to me of love! I—I—am married!"

I reeled as if I had received a mortal blow; a sickness struck to my very heart. I caught at a window frame for support. For a moment or two everything was chaos around me. When I recovered, I beheld Bianca lying on a sofa, her face buried in the pillow, and sobbing convulsively. Indignation for her fickleness for a moment overpowered every other feeling.

"Faithless! perjured!" cried I, striding across the room. But another glance at that beautiful being in distress checked all my wrath. Anger could not dwell together with her idea in my soul.

"Oh, Bianca!" exclaimed I, in anguish, "could I have dreamed of this? Could I have suspected you would have been false to me?"

She raised her face, all streaming with tears, all disordered with emotion, and gave me one appealing look. "False to you? They told me you were dead!"

"What!" said I, "in spite of our constant correspondence?"

She gazed wildly at me. "Correspondence? what correspondence?"

"Have you not repeatedly received and replied to my letters?"

She clasped her hands with solemnity and fervor. "As I hope for mercy—never!"

A horrible surmise shot through my brain. "Who told you I was dead?"

"It was reported that the ship in which you embarked for Naples perished at sea."

"But who told you the report?"

She paused for an instant, and trembled;—"Filippo!"

"May the God of heaven curse him!" cried I, extending my clinched fists aloft.

"Oh, do not curse him, do not curse him!" exclaimed she; "he is—he is—my husband!"

This was all that was wanting to unfold the perfidy that had been practiced upon me. My blood boiled like liquid fire in my veins. I gasped with rage too great for utterance. I remained for a time bewildered by the whirl of horrible thoughts that rushed through my mind. The poor victim of deception before me thought it was with her I was incensed. She faintly murmured forth her exculpation. I will not dwell upon it. I saw in it more than she meant to reveal. I saw with a glance how both of us had been betrayed.

"'Tis well," muttered I to myself in smothered accents of concentrated fury. "He shall render an account of all this."

Bianca overheard me. New terror flashed in her countenance. "For mercy's sake, do not meet him! say nothing of what has passed—for my sake say nothing to him. I only shall be the sufferer!"

A new suspicion darted across my mind. "What!" exclaimed

I, "do you then *fear* him? Is he *unkind* to you? Tell me," reiterated I, grasping her hand, and looking her eagerly in the face, "tell me—*dares* he to use you harshly?"

"No, no, no!" cried she, faltering and embarrassed; but the glance at her face had told volumes. I saw in her pallid and wasted features, in the prompt terror and subdued agony of her eye, a whole history of a mind broken down by tyranny. Great God! and was this beauteous flower snatched from me to be thus trampled upon? The idea roused me to madness. I clinched my teeth and hands; I foamed at the mouth; every passion seemed to have resolved itself into the fury that like a lava boiled within my heart. Bianca shrunk from me in speechless affright. As I strode by the window, my eye darted down the alley. Fatal moment! I beheld Filippo at a distance. My brain was in delirium. I sprang from the pavilion, and was before him with the quickness of lightning. He saw me as I came rushing upon him; he turned pale, looked wildly to right and left, as if he would have fled, and trembling, drew his sword.

"Wretch!" cried I, "well may you draw your weapon!"

I spoke not another word. I snatched forth a stiletto, put by the sword which trembled in his hand, and buried my poniard in his bosom. He fell with the blow, but my rage was unsated. I sprang upon him with the bloodthirsty feeling of a tiger, redoubled my blows, mangled him in my frenzy, grasped him by the throat, until, with reiterated wounds and strangling convulsions, he expired in my grasp. I remained glaring on the countenance, horrible in death, that seemed to stare back with its protruded eyes upon me. Piercing shrieks roused me from my delirium. I looked round and beheld Bianca flying distractedly towards us. My brain whirled; I waited not to meet her, but fled from the scene of horror. I fled forth from the garden like another Cain, a hell within my bosom, and a curse upon my head. I fled without knowing whither, almost without knowing why. My only idea was to get farther and farther from the horrors I had left behind—as if I could throw space between myself

and my conscience. I fled to the Apennines, and wandered for days and days among their savage heights. How I existed I cannot tell; what rocks and precipices I braved, and how I braved them, I know not. I kept on and on, trying to outtravel the curse that clung to me. Alas! the shrieks of Bianca rung forever in my ears. The horrible countenance of my victim was forever before my eyes. The blood of Filippo cried to me from the ground. Rocks, trees, and torrents, all resounded with my crime. Then it was I felt how much more insupportable is the anguish of remorse than every other mental pang. Oh, could I but have cast off this crime that festered in my heart! Could I but have regained the innocence that reigned in my breast as I entered the garden at Sestri! Could I but have restored my victim to life, I felt as if I could look on with transport, even though Bianca were in his arms.

By degrees this frenzied fever of remorse settled into a permanent malady of the mind,—into one of the most horrible that ever poor wretch was cursed with. Wherever I went, the countenance of him I had slain appeared to follow me. Whenever I turned my head, I beheld it behind me, hideous with the contortions of the dying moment. I have tried in every way to escape from this horrible phantom, but in vain. I know not whether it be an illusion of the mind, the consequence of my dismal education at the convent, or whether a phantom really sent by Heaven to punish me, but there it ever is, at all times, in all places. Nor has time nor habit had any effect in familiarizing me with its terrors. I have traveled from place to place, plunged into amusements, tried dissipation and distraction of every kind; all, all in vain. I once had recourse to my pencil as a desperate experiment. I painted an exact resemblance of this phantom face. I placed it before me, in hopes that by constantly contemplating the copy I might diminish the effect of the original. But I only doubled instead of diminishing the misery. Such is the curse that has clung to my footsteps; that has made my life a burden, but the thought of death terrible.

God knows what I have suffered,—what days and days, and nights and nights, of sleepless torment; what a never-dying worm has preyed upon my heart; what an unquenchable fire has burned within my brain! He knows the wrongs that wrought upon my poor, weak nature; that converted the tenderest of affections into the deadliest of fury. He knows best whether a frail, erring creature has expiated by long-enduring torture and measureless remorse the crime of a moment of madness. Often, often, have I prostrated myself in the dust, and implored that He would give me a sign of his forgiveness, and let me die——

Thus far had I written some time since. I had meant to leave this record of misery and crime with you, to be read when I should be no more.

My prayer to Heaven has at length been heard. You were witness to my emotions last evening at the church, when the vaulted temple resounded with the words of atonement and redemption. I heard a voice speaking to me from the midst of the music; I heard it rising above the pealing of the organ and the voices of the choir; it spoke to me in tones of celestial melody; it promised mercy and forgiveness, but demanded from me full expiation. I go to make it. To-morrow I shall be on my way to Genoa, to surrender myself to justice. You who have pitied my sufferings, who have poured the balm of sympathy into my wounds, do not shrink from my memory with abhorrence now that you know my story. Recollect that when you read of my crime I shall have atoned for it with my blood!

When the Baronet had finished, there was a universal desire expressed to see the painting of this frightful visage. After much entreaty, the Baronet consented on condition that they should only visit it one by one. He called his housekeeper, and gave her charge to conduct the gentlemen, singly, to the chamber. They all returned varying in their stories, some affected in one way, some in another, some more, some less, but all agreeing

that there was a certain something about the painting that had a very odd effect upon the feelings.

I stood in a deep bow window with the Baronet, and could not help expressing my wonder. "After all," said I, "there are certain mysteries in our nature, certain inscrutable impulses and influences, which warrant one in being superstitious. Who can account for so many persons of different characters being thus strangely affected by a mere painting?"

"And especially when not one of them has seen it," said the Baronet, with a smile.

"How!" exclaimed I, "not seen it?"

"Not one of them!" replied he, laying his finger on his lips, in sign of secrecy. "I saw that some of them were in a bantering vein, and did not choose that the memento of the poor Italian should be made a jest of. So I gave the housekeeper a hint to show them all to a different chamber!"

Thus end the stories of the Nervous Gentleman.

PART II.

BUCKTHORNE AND HIS FRIENDS.

This world is the best that we live in,
To lend, or to spend, or to give in;
But to beg, or to borrow, or get a man's own,
'Tis the very worst world, sir, that ever was known.

Lines from an Inn Window.

LITERARY LIFE.

AMONG other subjects of a traveler's curiosity, I had at one time a great craving after anecdotes of literary life, and being at London, one of the most noted places for the production of books, I was excessively anxious to know something of the animals which produced them. Chance fortunately threw me in the way of a literary man by the name of Buckthorne, an eccentric personage, who had lived much in the metropolis, and could give me the natural history of every odd animal to be met with in that wilderness of men. He readily imparted to me some useful hints upon the subject of my inquiry.

"The literary world," said he, "is made up of little confederacies, each looking upon its own members as the lights of the universe, and considering all others as mere transient meteors, doomed soon to fall and be forgotten, while its own luminaries are to shine steadily on to immortality."

"And pray," said I, "how is a man to get a peep into those confederacies you speak of? I presume an intercourse with authors is a kind of intellectual exchange, where one must bring his commodities to barter, and always give a *quid pro quo*."[1]

"Pooh, pooh! how you mistake!" said Buckthorne, smiling; "you must never think to become popular among wits by shining. They go into society to shine themselves, not to admire the brilliancy of others. I once thought as you do, and never went into literary society without studying my part beforehand; the consequence was that I soon got the name of an intolerable proser,

[1] Literally, "what for what;" hence, one thing for another, or an equivalent.

and should in a little while have been completely excommunicated, had I not changed my plan of operations. No, sir, no character succeeds so well among wits as that of a good listener; or if ever you are eloquent, let it be when tête-à-tête with an author, and then in praise of his own works, or, what is nearly as acceptable, in disparagement of the works of his contemporaries. If ever he speaks favorably of the productions of a particular friend, dissent boldly from him; pronounce his friend to be a blockhead; never fear his being vexed. Much as people speak of the irritability of authors, I never found one to take offense at such contradictions. No, no, sir, authors are particularly candid in admitting the faults of their friends.

"Indeed, I would advise you to be exceedingly sparing of remarks on all modern works, except to make sarcastic observations on the most distinguished writers of the day."

"Faith," said I, "I'll praise none that have not been dead for at least half a century."

"Even then," observed Mr. Buckthorne, "I would advise you to be rather cautious, for you must know that many old writers have been enlisted under the banners of different sects, and their merits have become as completely topics of party discussion as the merits of living statesmen and politicians. Nay, there have been whole periods of literature absolutely tabooed,[1] to use a South Sea phrase. It is, for example, as much as a man's critical reputation is worth in some circles, to say a word in praise of any of the writers of the reign of Charles II.,[2] or even of Queen Anne, they being all declared Frenchmen in disguise."

[1] Taboo ("to forbid") is derived from *tabu*, the name of a religious interdict or ban of any kind among the races of the South Pacific.

[2] In the age of Charles II., poetry was governed more by the rules of art than it had been in the Elizabethan age, and a colder, more correct style arose, attributed partly to the influence of the French writers of the time. The literature of Queen Anne's age was essentially a party literature. During this period, form was dwelt on more than matter, so that while the prose became simple and clear and the poetry reached a neatness of expression, nature, passion, and imagination were lacking.

"And pray," said I, "when am I then to know that I am on safe grounds, being totally unacquainted with the literary landmarks, and the boundary line of fashionable taste?"

"Oh!" replied he, "there is fortunately one tract of literature which forms a kind of neutral ground, on which all the literary meet amicably, and run riot in the excess of their good humor; and this is the reigns of Elizabeth[1] and James.[1] Here you may praise away at random. Here it is 'cut and come again';[2] and the more obscure the author, and the more quaint and crabbed his style, the more your admiration will smack of the real relish of the connoisseur, whose taste, like that of an epicure, is always for game that has an antiquated flavor.

"But," continued he, "as you seem anxious to know something of literary society, I will take an opportunity to introduce you to some coterie, where the talents of the day are assembled. I cannot promise you, however, that they will all be of the first order. Somehow or other, our great geniuses are not gregarious; they do not go in flocks, but fly singly in general society. They prefer mingling like common men with the multitude, and are apt to carry nothing of the author about them but the reputation. It is only the inferior orders that herd together, acquire strength and importance by their confederacies, and bear all the distinctive characteristics of their species."

[1] The Elizabethan age, the most glorious era in English literature, dates from the accession of Elizabeth to her death (1559–1603). The age of James formed a transition from that of Elizabeth to that of Charles II.

[2] "Cut and," etc., a hospitable phrase, or phrase of welcome, signifying that there is enough for all the guests.

A LITERARY DINNER.

A FEW days after this conversation with Mr. Buckthorne, he called upon me, and took me with him to a regular literary dinner. It was given by a great bookseller, or rather a company of booksellers, whose firm surpassed in length that of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.[1]

I was surprised to find between twenty and thirty guests assembled, most of whom I had never seen before. Mr. Buckthorne explained this to me by informing me that this was a business dinner, or kind of field day which the house gave about twice a year to its authors. It is true they did occasionally give snug dinners to three or four literary men at a time; but then these were generally select authors, favorites of the public, such as had arrived at their sixth or seventh editions. "There are," said he, "certain geographical boundaries in the land of literature, and you may judge tolerably well of an author's popularity by the wine his bookseller gives him. An author crosses the port line about the third edition, and gets into claret; and when he has reached the sixth or seventh, he may revel in champagne and Burgundy."

"And pray," said I, "how far may these gentlemen have reached that I see around me? Are any of these claret drinkers?"

"Not exactly, not exactly. You find at these great dinners the common, steady run of authors, one or two edition men, or if any others are invited, they are aware that it is a kind of republican meeting,—you understand me,—a meeting of the republic

[1] Three men mentioned in the Bible, who, being cast by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, into a fiery furnace, because of their refusal to worship a golden image, rose and walked in the midst of the flames (see Daniel iii.). The allusion here is merely to the length of the names, being a pun upon "Longmans," the name of the booksellers mentioned.

of letters, and that they must expect nothing but plain, substantial fare."

These hints enabled me to comprehend more fully the arrangement of the table. The two ends were occupied by two partners of the house; and the host seemed to have adopted Addison's[1] idea as to the literary precedence of his guests. A popular poet had the post of honor, opposite to whom was a hotpressed[2] traveler in quarto with plates. A grave-looking antiquarian, who had produced several solid works, that were much quoted and little read, was treated with great respect, and seated next to a neat, dressy gentleman in black, who had written a thin, genteel, hotpressed octavo on political economy, that was getting into fashion. Several three-volumed duodecimo men, of fair currency, were placed about the center of the table, while the lower end was taken up with small poets, translators, and authors who had not as yet risen into much notoriety.

The conversation during dinner was by fits and starts, breaking out here and there in various parts of the table in small flashes, and ending in smoke. The poet, who had the confidence of a man on good terms with the world, and independent of his bookseller, was very gay and brilliant, and said many clever things which set the partner next him in a roar, and delighted all the company. The other partner, however, maintained his sedateness, and kept carving on, with the air of a thorough man of business, intent upon the occupation of the moment. His gravity was explained to me by my friend Buckthorne. He informed me that the concerns of the house were admirably dis-

[1] Joseph Addison (1672–1719), English poet and essayist, was joint editor with Richard Steele (1671–1729) of two famous English periodicals, The Tatler and The Spectator, which discussed everything that went on in the world—political and literary disputes, fine gentlemen and ladies, the new book, the new play, etc. Addison's work is critical and literary, his humor is fine and tender, and his characters are true to life.

[2] Pressed with heat, giving a smooth and glossy surface to paper. Hence, "hotpressed traveler," the author of a book on travels considered worthy of being printed on good paper.

tributed among the partners. "Thus, for instance," said he, "the grave gentleman is the carving partner, who attends to the joints, and the other is the laughing partner, who attends to the jokes."

The general conversation was chiefly carried on at the upper end of the table, as the authors there seemed to possess the greatest courage of the tongue. As to the crew at the lower end, if they did not make much figure in talking, they did in eating. Never was there a more determined, inveterate, thoroughly sustained attack on the trencher than by this phalanx of masticators.[1] When the cloth was removed, and the wine began to circulate, they grew very merry and jocose among themselves. Their jokes, however, if by chance any of them reached the upper end of the table, seldom produced much effect. Even the laughing partner did not think it necessary to honor them with a smile, which my neighbor Buckthorne accounted for by informing me that there was a certain degree of popularity to be obtained before a bookseller could afford to laugh at an author's jokes.

Among this crew of questionable gentlemen thus seated below the salt,[2] my eye singled out one in particular. He was rather shabbily dressed, though he had evidently made the most of a rusty black coat, and wore his shirt frill plaited and puffed out voluminously at the bosom. His face was dusky, but florid, perhaps a little too florid, particularly about the nose, though the rosy hue gave the greater luster to a twinkling black eye. He had a little the look of a boon companion, with that dash of the poor devil in it which gives an inexpressible mellow tone to a man's humor. I had seldom seen a face of richer promise, but never was promise so ill kept. He said nothing, ate and drank with the keen appetite of a garreteer, and scarcely stopped to

[1] "Phalanx of masticators," i.e., company of eaters.

[2] In former times it was customary among people of rank to place a large saltcellar near the middle of a long table, and to assign to guests of distinction the places above the salt, and to inferiors, those below it. Hence, "below the salt" means "in an inferior position."

laugh, even at the good jokes from the upper end of the table. I inquired who he was. Buckthorne looked at him attentively. "Gad!" said he, "I have seen that face before, but where I cannot recollect. He cannot be an author of any note. I suppose some writer of sermons, or grinder of foreign travels."

After dinner we retired to another room to take tea and coffee, where we were reënforced by a cloud of inferior guests, — authors of small volumes in boards, and pamphlets stitched in blue paper. These had not as yet arrived to the importance of a dinner invitation, but were invited occasionally to pass the evening in a friendly way. They were very respectful to the partners, and, indeed, seemed to stand a little in awe of them; but they paid devoted court to the lady of the house, and were extravagantly fond of the children. Some few, who did not feel confidence enough to make such advances, stood shyly off in corners, talking to one another, or turned over the portfolios of prints which they had not seen above five thousand times, or moused over[1] the music on the forte-piano.[2]

The poet and the thin octavo gentleman[3] were the persons most current and at their ease in the drawing-room, being men evidently of circulation in the West End.[4] They got on each side of the lady of the house, and paid her a thousand compliments and civilities, at some of which I thought she would have expired with delight. Everything they said and did had the odor of fashionable life. I looked round in vain for the poor-devil author in the rusty black coat; he had disappeared immediately after leaving the table, having a dread, no doubt, of the glaring light of a drawing-room. Finding nothing further to interest my attention, I took my departure soon after coffee had been served, leaving the poet, and the thin, genteel, hotpressed octavo gentleman, masters of the field.

1 "Moused over," i.e., glanced slyly over.

2 Same as pianoforte.

3 The author of the thin octavo book.

4 The fashionable quarter of London, containing the Palace and the mansions of the aristocracy.

THE CLUB OF QUEER FELLOWS.

I THINK it was the very next evening that, in coming out of Covent Garden Theater with my eccentric friend Buckthorne, he proposed to give me another peep at life and character. Finding me willing for any research of the kind, he took me through a variety of the narrow courts and lanes about Covent Garden, until we stopped before a tavern, from which we heard the bursts of merriment of a jovial party. There would be a loud peal of laughter, then an interval, then another peal, as if a prime wag were telling a story. After a little while there was a song, and at the close of each stanza, a hearty roar and a vehement thumping on the table.

"This is the place," whispered Buckthorne; "it is the Club of Queer Fellows, a great resort of the small wits, third-rate actors, and newspaper critics of the theaters. Any one can go in on paying a sixpence at the bar for the use of the club."

We entered, therefore, without ceremony, and took our seats at a lone table in a dusky corner of the room. The club was assembled round a table on which stood beverages of various kinds, according to the tastes of the individuals. The members were a set of queer fellows indeed; but what was my surprise on recognizing, in the prime wit of the meeting, the poor-devil author whom I had remarked at the booksellers' dinner for his promising face and his complete taciturnity. Matters, however, were entirely changed with him. There he was a mere cipher; here he was lord of the ascendant,—the choice spirit, the dominant genius. He sat at the head of the table with his hat on, and an eye beaming even more luminously than his nose. He had a quip and a fillip for every one, and a good thing on every occasion. Nothing could be said or done without eliciting a spark from him, and I solemnly declare I have heard much worse wit even from noblemen. His jokes, it must be confessed, were rather wet, but they suited the circle over which he presided.

The company were in that maudlin mood when a little wit goes a great way. Every time he opened his lips there was sure to be a roar, and even sometimes before he had time to speak.

We were fortunate enough to enter in time for a glee composed by him expressly for the club, and which he sung with two boon companions, who would have been worthy subjects for Hogarth's[1] pencil. As they were each provided with a written copy, I was enabled to procure the reading of it.

"Merrily, merrily push round the glass,
And merrily troll the glee,
For he who won't drink till he wink, is an ass;
So, neighbor, I drink to thee.

"Merrily, merrily fuddle thy nose,
Until it right rosy shall be;
For a jolly red nose, I speak under the rose,
Is a sign of good company."

We waited until the party broke up, and no one but the wit remained. He sat at the table with his legs stretched under it, and wide apart, his hands in his breeches pockets, his head drooped upon his breast, and gazing with lackluster countenance on an empty tankard. His gayety was gone, his fire completely quenched.

My companion approached, and startled him from his fit of brown study, introducing himself on the strength of their having dined together at the booksellers'.

"By the way," said he, "it seems to me I have seen you before; your face is surely that of an old acquaintance, though for the life of me I cannot tell where I have known you."

1 William Hogarth (1697–1764), an English artist, whose work is of a satirical character. He painted pictures in which he portrayed some great moral truth by satirizing the steps downward from the right path.

"Very likely," replied he, with a smile, "many of my old friends have forgotten me; though, to tell the truth, my memory in this instance is as bad as your own. If, however, it will assist your recollection in any way, my name is Thomas Dribble, at your service."

"What! Tom Dribble, who was at old Birchell's school in Warwickshire?"[1]

"The same," said the other coolly.

"Why, then, we are old schoolmates, though it's no wonder you don't recollect me. I was your junior by several years; don't you recollect little Jack Buckthorne?"

Here there ensued a scene of schoolfellow recognition, and a world of talk about old school times and school pranks. Mr. Dribble ended by observing, with a heavy sigh, that times were sadly changed since those days.

"Faith, Mr. Dribble," said I, "you seem quite a different man here from what you were at dinner. I had no idea that you had so much stuff in you. There you were all silence, but here you absolutely keep the table in a roar."

"Ah! my dear sir," replied he, with a shake of the head, and a shrug of the shoulder, "I am a mere glowworm. I never shine by daylight. Besides, it's a hard thing for a poor devil of an author to shine at the table of a rich bookseller. Who do you think would laugh at anything I could say, when I had some of the current wits of the day about me? But here, though a poor devil, I am among still poorer devils than myself,—men who look up to me as a man of letters, and a *bel esprit*,[2] and all my jokes pass as sterling gold from the mint."

"You surely do yourself injustice, sir," said I; "I have cer-

[1] Warwickshire, or Warwick, is a county of England, whose capital, Warwick, is on the right bank of the Avon, twenty miles southeast of Birmingham, and two and a half miles west of Leamington. Between the town of Warwick and the river, on a steep hill, is Warwick Castle, one of the most perfect and magnificent feudal fortresses in England.

[2] A man of wit or brilliant mind.

tainly heard more good things from you this evening than from any of those *beaux esprits* by whom you appear to have been so daunted."

"Ah, sir! but they have luck on their side; they are in the fashion. There's nothing like being in fashion. A man that has once got his character up for a wit is always sure of a laugh, say what he may. He may utter as much nonsense as he pleases, and all will pass current. No one stops to question the coin of a rich man; but a poor devil cannot pass off either a joke or a guinea without its being examined on both sides. Wit and coin are always doubted with a threadbare coat.

"For my part," continued he, giving his hat a twitch a little more on one side, "for my part, I hate your fine dinners; there's nothing, sir, like the freedom of a chophouse. I'd rather, any time, have my steak and tankard among my own set than drink claret and eat venison with your cursed civil, elegant company, who never laugh at a good joke from a poor devil for fear of its being vulgar. A good joke grows in a wet soil; it flourishes in low places, but withers on your d—d high, dry grounds. I once kept high company, sir, until I nearly ruined myself, I grew so dull, and vapid, and genteel. Nothing saved me but being arrested by my landlady, and thrown into prison, where a course of catch-clubs,[1] eightpenny ale, and poor-devil company, manured my mind, and brought it back to itself again."

As it was now growing late, we parted for the evening, though I felt anxious to know more of this practical philosopher. I was glad, therefore, when Buckthorne proposed to have another meeting to talk over old school times, and inquired his schoolmate's address. The latter seemed at first a little shy of naming his lodgings, but suddenly, assuming an air of hardihood, "Green-arbor Court, sir," exclaimed he, "Number—— in Green-arbor Court. You must know the place. Classic ground, sir, classic

[1] Clubs formed for singing catches, which are songs designed to give ludicrous effects to the different verses or parts.

ground! It was there Goldsmith[1] wrote his 'Vicar of Wakefield.' I always like to live in literary haunts."

I was amused with this whimsical apology for shabby quarters. On our way homewards, Buckthorne assured me that this Dribble had been the prime wit and great wag of the school in their boyish days, and one of those unlucky urchins denominated "bright geniuses." As he perceived me curious respecting his old schoolmate, he promised to take me with him in his proposed visit to Green-arbor Court.

A few mornings afterwards he called upon me, and we set forth on our expedition. He led me through a variety of singular alleys, and courts, and blind passages, for he appeared to be perfectly versed in all the intricate geography of the metropolis. At length we came out upon Fleet Market, and traversing it, turned up a narrow street to the bottom of a long, steep flight of stone steps, called Breakneck Stairs. These, he told me, led up to Green-arbor Court, and that down them poor Goldsmith might many a time have risked his neck. When we entered the court, I could not but smile to think in what out-of-the-way corners genius produces her bantlings! And the Muses, those capricious dames, who, forsooth, so often refuse to visit palaces, and deny a single smile to votaries in splendid studies, and gilded drawing-rooms, — what holes and burrows will they frequent to lavish their favors on some ragged disciple!

This Green-arbor Court I found to be a small square, surrounded by tall and miserable houses, the very intestines of which seemed turned inside out, to judge from the old garments and frippery fluttering from every window. It appeared to be a

[1] Oliver Goldsmith (1728–74), Irish poet, historian, and novelist. His verse is noted for its grace and simplicity. His best-known works are The Deserted Village, his novel, The Vicar of Wakefield, and a series of letters called The Citizen of the World. Goldsmith was always in straits of poverty and in pecuniary difficulties. Even when his popularity was at its height and his income greatly increased, his extravagance and lavish generosity kept him constantly in debt, for which he was frequently under arrest.

region of washerwomen, and lines were stretched about the little square, on which clothes were dangling to dry.

Just as we entered the square, a scuffle took place between two viragoes about a disputed right to a washtub, and immediately the whole community was in a hubbub. Heads in mob-caps popped out of every window, and such a clamor of tongues ensued that I was fain to stop my ears. Every amazon took part with one or other of the disputants, and brandished her arms, dripping with soapsuds, and fired away from her window as from the embrasure of a fortress, while the swarms of children, nestled and cradled in every procreant chamber of this hive, waking with the noise, set up their shrill pipes to swell the general concert.

Poor Goldsmith! what a time he must have had of it, with his quiet disposition and nervous habits, penned up in this den of noise and vulgarity! How strange, that while every sight and sound was sufficient to imbitter the heart, and fill it with misanthropy, his pen should be dropping the honey of Hybla![1] Yet it is more than probable that he drew many of his inimitable pictures of low life from the scenes which surrounded him in this abode. The circumstance of Mrs. Tibbs[2] being obliged to wash her husband's two shirts in a neighbor's house, who refused to lend her washtub, may have been no sport of fancy, but a fact passing under his own eye. His landlady may have sat for the picture, and Beau Tibbs's scanty wardrobe have been a facsimile of his own.

It was with some difficulty that we found our way to Dribble's lodgings. They were up two pairs of stairs, in a room that looked

[1] An ancient city on the coast of Sicily, famed for the sweetness of the honey produced on its neighboring hills.

[2] Mrs. Tibbs was the wife of Beau Tibbs (a character in Goldsmith's Citizen of the World), a poor fellow who imagined that he knew the best society, that his garret was the choicest spot in London, and his wife (a slattern and coquette) a lady of distinction. On one occasion he brought to his garret a distinguished ambassador. "Where's my lady?" he asked of the Scotch servant. "She's a-washing your twa shirts at the next door, because they won't lend us the tub any longer," was the reply.

upon the court, and when we entered he was seated on the edge of his bed, writing at a broken table. He received us, however, with a free, open, poor-devil air that was irresistible. It is true he did at first appear slightly confused, buttoned up his waistcoat a little higher, and tucked in a stray frill of linen. But he recollected himself in an instant, gave a half swagger, half leer, as he stepped forth to receive us, drew a three-legged stool for Mr. Buckthorne, pointed me to a lumbering old damask chair that looked like a dethroned monarch in exile, and bade us welcome to his garret.

We soon got engaged in conversation. Buckthorne and he had much to say about early school scenes, and as nothing opens a man's heart more than recollections of the kind, we soon drew from him a brief outline of his literary career.

THE POOR-DEVIL AUTHOR.

I BEGAN life unluckily by being the wag and bright fellow at school, and I had the further misfortune of becoming the great genius of my native village. My father was a country attorney, and intended I should succeed him in business, but I had too much genius to study, and he was too fond of my genius to force it into the traces,[1] so I fell into bad company, and took to bad habits. Do not mistake me. I mean that I fell into the company of village literati[2] and village blues,[3] and took to writing village poetry.

It was quite the fashion in the village to be literary. There was a little knot of choice spirits of us, who assembled frequently together, formed ourselves into a Literary, Scientific, and Philosophical Society, and fancied ourselves the most learned Philos[4]

[1] "Into the traces," i.e., into steady employment.

[2] Literary men. [3] Same as bluestockings (see Note 3, p. 23).

[4] Lovers of literature and the sciences.

in existence. Every one had a great character assigned him, suggested by some casual habit or affectation. One heavy fellow drank an enormous quantity of tea, rolled in his armchair, talked sententiously, pronounced dogmatically, and was considered a second Dr. Johnson;[1] another, who happened to be a curate, uttered coarse jokes, wrote doggerel rhymes, and was the Swift[2] of our association. Thus we had also our Popes[3] and Goldsmiths, and Addisons, and a bluestocking lady, whose drawing-room we frequented, who corresponded about nothing with all the world, and wrote letters with the stiffness and formality of a printed book, was cried up as another Mrs. Montagu.[4] I was by common consent the juvenile prodigy, the poetical youth, the great genius, the pride and hope of the village, through whom it was to become one day as celebrated as Stratford-on-Avon.[5]

My father died, and left me his blessing and his business. His blessing brought no money into my pocket, and as to his business,

[1] Samuel Johnson (1709–84), English miscellaneous writer, author of Dictionary of the English Language, Rasselas, and Lives of the English Poets, holds a unique place in English literature. He was noted for his wonderful conversational powers, and "talked as well as wrote literature." His passion for tea drinking was remarkable; it is said that at one time he drank twenty cups at one sitting.

[2] Jonathan Swift (1667–1745), English author. He was noted for his sarcasm and humor, but this humor was often of a very coarse nature. Gulliver's Travels and the Battle of the Books are his most popular works.

[3] Alexander Pope (1688–1744), an English poet of finished verse, but of no great originality. His most important poems are The Essay on Man and the Dunciad.

[4] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1690–1762), a celebrated English writer. In 1716 she accompanied her husband on his embassy to Constantinople, from which place she wrote to Pope, Addison, and other prominent men of the time, letters describing the scenes and customs of the East. These with others were published after her death, and rendered her name famous to posterity.

[5] A town of England on the north bank of the Avon, famous as the birthplace of William Shakespeare. The Avon is a river which flows through Warwickshire County, England, and is rich in its associations with Shakespeare.

it soon deserted me, for I was busy writing poetry, and could not attend to law, and my clients, though they had great respect for my talents, had no faith in a poetical attorney.

I lost my business, therefore, spent my money, and finished my poem. It was "The Pleasures of Melancholy," and was cried up to the skies by the whole circle. The "Pleasures of Imagination,"[1] the "Pleasures of Hope,"[2] and the "Pleasures of Memory,"[3] though each had placed its author in the first rank of poets, were blank prose in comparison. Our Mrs. Montagu would cry over it from beginning to end. It was pronounced by all the members of the Literary, Scientific, and Philosophical Society the greatest poem of the age, and all anticipated the noise it would make in the great world. There was not a doubt but the London booksellers would be mad after it, and the only fear of my friends was that I would make a sacrifice by selling it too cheap. Every time they talked the matter over, they increased the price. They reckoned up the great sums given for the poems of certain popular writers, and determined that mine was worth more than all put together, and ought to be paid for accordingly. For my part, I was modest in my expectations, and determined that I would be satisfied with a thousand guineas. So I put my poem in my pocket, and set off for London.

My journey was joyous. My heart was light as my purse, and my head full of anticipations of fame and fortune. With what swelling pride did I cast my eyes upon old London from the heights of Highgate![4] I was like a general looking down upon a place he expects to conquer. The great metropolis lay stretched before me, buried under a homemade cloud of murky smoke, that wrapped it from the brightness of a sunny day, and formed for it a kind of artificial bad weather. At the outskirts of the

[1] By Mark Akenside, English poet (1721–70).

[2] By Thomas Campbell, Scotch poet (1777–1844).

[3] By Samuel Rogers, English poet (1763–1855).

[4] A village of Middlesex County, England, situated on a hill to the north of London, and commanding a fine view of the city.

city, away to the west, the smoke gradually decreased until all was clear and sunny, and the view stretched uninterrupted to the blue line of the Kentish hills.

My eye turned fondly to where the mighty cupola of St. Paul's[1] swelled dimly through this misty chaos, and I pictured to myself the solemn realm of learning that lies about its base. How soon should "The Pleasures of Melancholy" throw this world of booksellers and printers into a bustle of business and delight! How soon should I hear my name repeated by printers' devils throughout Paternoster Row, and Angel Court, and Ave Maria Lane, until Amen Corner[2] should echo back the sound!

Arrived in town, I repaired at once to the most fashionable publisher. Every new author patronizes him of course. In fact, it had been determined in the village circle that he should be the fortunate man. I cannot tell you how vaingloriously I walked the streets. My head was in the clouds. I felt the airs of heaven playing about it, and fancied it already encircled by a halo of literary glory. As I passed by the windows of bookshops, I anticipated the time when my work would be shining among the hot-pressed wonders of the day, and my face scratched on copper, or cut on wood, figuring in fellowship with those of Scott,[3] and Byron,[4] and Moore.[5]

[1] St. Paul's Cathedral, which stands in the heart of London, is the third largest church in the world. Its dome is the finest in the world.

[2] Before the Reformation, in the early part of the sixteenth century, the clergy walked annually in a procession to St. Paul's Cathedral on Corpus Christi Day. They mustered at the upper end of Cheapside, and there commenced to chant the Paternoster, which they continued the whole length of the street, hence called Paternoster Row, pronouncing the Amen at the spot now called Amen Corner. Then commencing the Ave Maria, they turned down Ave Maria Lane. After crossing Ludgate, they chanted the Credo in Creed Lane.

[3] See Note 1, p. 23.

[4] Lord George Gordon Byron (1788–1824), English poet, author of Childe Harold.

[5] Thomas Moore (1780–1852), Irish poet, author of Irish Melodies, Lalla Rookh, Loves of the Angels, etc.

When I applied at the publisher's house, there was something in the loftiness of my air, and the dinginess of my dress, that struck the clerks with reverence. They doubtless took me for some person of consequence, probably a digger of Greek roots, or a penetrator of pyramids. A proud man in a dirty shirt is always an imposing character in the world of letters. One must feel intellectually secure before he can venture to dress shabbily; none but a great genius, or a great scholar, dares to be dirty; so I was ushered at once to the *sanctum sanctorum*[1] of this high priest of Minerva.[2]

The publishing of books is a very different affair nowadays from what it was in the time of Bernard Lintot.[3] I found the publisher a fashionably dressed man, in an elegant drawing-room, furnished with sofas, and portraits of celebrated authors, and cases of splendidly bound books. He was writing letters at an elegant table. This was transacting business in style. The place seemed suited to the magnificent publications that issued from it. I rejoiced at the choice I had made of a publisher, for I always liked to encourage men of taste and spirit.

I stepped up to the table with the lofty poetical port I had been accustomed to maintain in our village circle, though I threw in it something of a patronizing air, such as one feels when about to make a man's fortune. The publisher paused with his pen in hand, and seemed waiting in mute suspense to know what was to be announced by so singular an apparition.

I put him at his ease in a moment, for I felt that I had but to come, see, and conquer. I made known my name, and the name of my poem, produced my precious roll of blotted manuscript, laid it on the table with an emphasis, and told him at once,

[1] Holy of holies, the most holy place in a Jewish temple; hence, a place of retreat.

[2] In classical mythology, the goddess of wisdom and the patroness of the arts and sciences.

[3] A famous bookseller of the eighteenth century, the publisher of several of Alexander Pope's works.

to save time, and come directly to the point, — the price was one thousand guineas.

I had given him no time to speak, nor did he seem so inclined. He continued looking at me for a moment with an air of whimsical perplexity, scanned me from head to foot, looked down at the manuscript, then up again at me, then pointed to a chair, and whistling softly to himself, went on writing his letter.

I sat for some time waiting his reply, supposing he was making up his mind; but he only paused occasionally to take a fresh dip of ink, to stroke his chin, or the tip of his nose, and then resumed his writing. It was evident his mind was intently occupied upon some other subject; but I had no idea that any other subject could be attended to, and my poem lie unnoticed on the table. I had supposed that everything would make way for "The Pleasures of Melancholy."

My gorge at length rose within me.[1] I took up my manuscript, thrust it into my pocket, and walked out of the room, making some noise as I went out, to let my departure be heard. The publisher, however, was too much buried in minor concerns to notice it. I was suffered to walk downstairs without being called back. I sallied forth into the street, but no clerk was sent after me, nor did the publisher call after me from the drawing-room window. I have been told since that he considered me either a madman or a fool. I leave you to judge how much he was in the wrong in his opinion.

When I turned the corner my crest fell. I cooled down in my pride and my expectations, and reduced my terms with the next bookseller to whom I applied. I had no better success, nor with a third, nor with a fourth. I then desired the booksellers to make an offer themselves, but the deuce an offer would they make. They told me poetry was a mere drug; everybody wrote poetry; the market was overstocked with it. And then they said the title of my poem was not taking; that pleasures of all kinds were worn threadbare; nothing but horrors did nowadays, and

[1] "My gorge," etc., i.e., I was filled with indignation.

even those were almost worn out. Tales of pirates, robbers, and bloody Turks, might answer tolerably well; but then they must come from some established, well-known name, or the public would not look at them.

At last I offered to leave my poem with a bookseller to read it and judge for himself. "Why, really, my dear Mr. —— a—a—I forget your name," said he, casting his eye at my rusty coat and shabby gaiters, "really, sir, we are so pressed with business just now, and have so many manuscripts on hand to read, that we have not time to look at any new productions; but if you can call again in a week or two, or say the middle of next month, we may be able to look over your writings, and give you an answer. Don't forget, the month after next; good morning, sir; happy to see you at any time you are passing this way." So saying, he bowed me out in the civilest way imaginable. In short, sir, instead of an eager competition to secure my poem, I could not even get it read! In the mean time I was harassed by letters from my friends, wanting to know when the work was to appear, who was to be my publisher, and above all things warning me not to let it go too cheap.

There was but one alternative left. I determined to publish the poem myself, and to have my triumph over the booksellers when it should become the fashion of the day. I accordingly published "The Pleasures of Melancholy," and ruined myself. Excepting the copies sent to the reviews, and to my friends in the country, not one, I believe, ever left the bookseller's warehouse. The printer's bill drained my purse, and the only notice that was taken of my work was contained in the advertisements paid for by myself.

I could have borne all this, and have attributed it, as usual, to the mismanagement of the publisher, or the want of taste in the public, and could have made the usual appeal to posterity; but my village friends would not let me rest in quiet. They were picturing me to themselves feasting with the great, communing with the literary, and in the high career of fortune and renown.

Every little while some one would call on me with a letter of introduction from the village circle, recommending him to my attentions, and requesting that I would make him known in society, with a hint that an introduction to a celebrated literary nobleman would be extremely agreeable. I determined, therefore, to change my lodgings, drop my correspondence, and disappear altogether from the view of my village admirers. Besides, I was anxious to make one more poetic attempt. I was by no means disheartened by the failure of my first. My poem was evidently too didactic. The public was wise enough. It no longer read for instruction. "They want horrors, do they?" said I: "I' faith! then they shall have enough of them." So I looked out for some quiet, retired place, where I might be out of the reach of my friends, and have leisure to cook up some delectable dish of poetical "hellbroth."

I had some difficulty in finding a place to my mind, when chance threw me in the way of Canonbury Castle.[1] It is an ancient brick tower hard by [2]"merry Islington," the remains of a hunting seat of Queen Elizabeth, where she took the pleasure of the country when the neighborhood was all woodland. What gave it particular interest in my eyes was the circumstance that it had been the residence of a poet.

It was here Goldsmith resided when he wrote his "Deserted Village." I was shown the very apartment. It was a relic of the original style of the castle, with paneled wainscots and Gothic windows. I was pleased with its air of antiquity, and with its having been the residence of poor "Goldy."

"Goldsmith was a pretty poet," said I to myself, "a very pretty poet, though rather of the old school. He did not think

1 Canonbury Castle is near Islington, a suburb of London, which was an occasional rural retreat of Queen Elizabeth. The castle is part of an old mansion erected by the canons of St. Bartholomew, and is rendered interesting from having been frequently the hiding place of Goldsmith when threatened with arrest. Here he wrote The Deserted Village and the Vicar of Wakefield.

2 "Hard by," i.e., near.

and feel so strongly as is the fashion nowadays; but had he lived in these times of hot hearts and hot heads, he would, no doubt, have written quite differently."

In a few days I was quietly established in my new quarters, — my books all arranged, my writing desk placed by a window looking out into the fields; and I felt as snug as Robinson Crusoe,[1] when he had finished his bower. For several days I enjoyed all the novelty of the change, and the charms which grace new lodgings before one has found out their defects. I rambled about the fields where I fancied Goldsmith had rambled. I explored merry Islington, ate my solitary dinner at the Black Bull, which, according to tradition, was a country seat of Sir Walter Raleigh,[2] and would sit and sip my wine, and muse on old times, in a quaint old room, where many a council had been held.

All this did very well for a few days. I was stimulated by novelty, inspired by the associations awakened in my mind by these curious haunts, and began to think I felt the spirit of composition stirring within me. But Sunday came, and with it the whole city world swarming about Canonbury Castle. I could not open my window but I was stunned with shouts and noises from the cricket ground; the late quiet road beneath my window was alive with the tread of feet and clack of tongues, and, to complete my misery, I found that my quiet retreat was absolutely a "show house," the tower and its contents being shown to strangers at sixpence a head.

There was a perpetual tramping upstairs of citizens and their families to look about the country from the top of the tower, and to take a peep at the city through the telescope, to try if

[1] The hero of Daniel Defoe's story of the same name, who, being wrecked on an uninhabited island, led for many years a solitary existence, the monotony of which he relieved by many ingenious contrivances. The tale was founded on the adventures of Alexander Selkirk, who was left on the desolate island of Juan Fernandez for over four years.

[2] English admiral and courtier (1552–1618), a favorite of Queen Elizabeth.

they could discern their own chimneys. And then, in the midst of a vein of thought, or a moment of inspiration, I was interrupted, and all my ideas put to flight, by my intolerable landlady's tapping at the door, and asking me if I would "just please to let a lady and gentleman come in to take a look at Mr. Goldsmith's room." If you know anything of what an author's study is, and what an author is himself, you must know that there was no standing this. I put positive interdict on my room's being exhibited; but then it was shown when I was absent, and my papers put in confusion, and, on returning home one day I absolutely found a cursed tradesman and his daughters gaping over my manuscripts, and my landlady in a panic at my appearance. I tried to make out[1] a little longer by taking the key in my pocket, but it would not do. I overheard mine hostess one day telling some of her customers on the stairs that the room was occupied by an author, who was always in a tantrum if interrupted, and I immediately perceived, by a slight noise at the door, that they were peeping at me through the keyhole. By the head of Apollo,[2] but this was quite too much! With all my eagerness for fame, and my ambition of the stare of the million, I had no idea of being exhibited by retail, at sixpence a head, and that through a keyhole. So I bade adieu to Canonbury Castle, merry Islington, and the haunts of poor Goldsmith, without having advanced a single line in my labors.

My next quarters were at a small, whitewashed cottage, which stands not far from Hampstead,[3] just on the brow of a hill, looking over Chalk Farm[4] and Camden Town,[5] remarkable for the

[1] "To make out," i.e., to endure it.

[2] The sun god among the Greeks and Romans, noted for his grace and manly beauty.

[3] A village of England in Middlesex County, a favorite resort of Londoners on holidays.

[4] Chalk Farm, at the foot of Primrose Hill (see Note 1, p. 139), was a retired spot on which many duels were fought.

[5] A suburb of London, three and a half miles northwest of St. Paul's.

rival houses of Mother Red Cap and Mother Black Cap,[1] and so across Crackskull Common[2] to the distant city.

The cottage was in nowise remarkable in itself, but I regarded it with reverence, for it had been the asylum of a persecuted author. Hither poor Steele had retreated, and lain perdu[3] when persecuted by creditors and bailiffs,—those immemorial plagues of authors and free-spirited gentlemen; and here he had written many numbers of the "Spectator."[4] It was hence, too, that he had dispatched those little notes to his lady, so full of affection and whimsicality, in which the fond husband, the careless gentleman, and the shifting spendthrift, were so oddly blended. I thought, as I first eyed the window of his apartment, that I could sit within it and write volumes.

No such thing. It was haymaking season, and, as ill luck would have it, immediately opposite the cottage was a little alehouse, with the sign of the Load of Hay. Whether it was there in Steele's time I cannot say, but it set all attempts at conception or inspiration at defiance. It was the resort of all the Irish haymakers who mow the broad fields in the neighborhood, and of drovers and teamsters who travel that road. Here they would gather in the endless summer twilight, or by the light of the harvest moon, and sit around a table at the door, and tipple and laugh and quarrel and fight, and sing drowsy songs, and dawdle away the hours, until the deep, solemn notes of St. Paul's clock would warn the varlets home.

In the daytime I was less able to write. It was broad sum-

[1] "Mother Red Cap" and "Mother Black Cap" were two old inns which nearly faced each other in High Street, Camden Town. The original proprietor of the former, who was regarded as a witch, derived her name, "Mother Red Cap," from the red cap which she wore. The other inn, "Mother Black Cap," was started and named in opposition to "Mother Red Cap." Two modern buildings bearing the same name now occupy the sites of these old inns.

[2] Crackskull Common, which formerly extended eastward from Hampstead, is no longer known as a locality.

[3] In concealment. [4] See Note 1, p. 119.

mer. The haymakers were at work in the fields, and the perfume of the new-mown hay brought with it the recollection of my native fields. So instead of remaining in my room to write, I went wandering about Primrose Hill,[1] and Hampstead Heights, and Shepherd's Fields,[2] and all those Arcadian[3] scenes so celebrated by London bards. I cannot tell you how many delicious hours I have passed, lying on the cocks of the new-mown hay, on the pleasant slopes of some of those hills, inhaling the fragrance of the fields, while the summer fly buzzed about me, or the grasshopper leaped into my bosom; and how I have gazed with half shut eye upon the smoky mass of London, and listened to the distant sound of its population, and pitied the poor sons of earth toiling in its bowels, like gnomes in the "dark gold mines."

People may say what they please about cockney[4] pastorals, but, after all, there is a vast deal of rural beauty about the western vicinity of London, and any one that has looked down upon the valley of the West End, with its soft bosom of green pasturage lying open to the south, and dotted with cattle, the steeple of Hampstead rising among rich groves on the brow of the hill, and the learned height of Harrow[5] in the distance, will confess that never has he seen a more absolutely rural landscape in the vicinity of a great metropolis.

Still, however, I found myself not a whit better off for my fre-

[1] A hill which commands a fine and extensive view of London. It is now laid out into walks and serves as a public garden, but formerly it was secluded and free from public notice.

[2] Shepherd's Fields, which formerly extended westward from Hampstead, is now built up, and is known as West Hampstead.

[3] Pertaining to Arcadia, which was a mountainous, picturesque district of Greece, where the people were distinguished for contentment and rural happiness; hence "ideally rural."

[4] A contemptuous term for natives of London.

[5] A town in Middlesex County, England, ten miles northwest of London, finely situated on the summit of a high hill. The Grammar School at Harrow, founded in 1571, is one of the most famous in England.

quent change of lodgings, and I began to discover that in literature, as in trade, the old proverb holds good, "a rolling stone gathers no moss."

The tranquil beauty of the country played the very vengeance with me. I could not mount my fancy into the termagant vein. I could not conceive, amidst the smiling landscape, a scene of blood and murder, and the smug citizens in breeches and gaiters put all ideas of heroes and bandits out of my brain. I could think of nothing but dulcet subjects,—"The Pleasures of Spring," "The Pleasures of Solitude," "The Pleasures of Tranquillity," "The Pleasures of Sentiment,"—nothing but pleasures; and I had the painful experience of "The Pleasures of Melancholy" too strongly in my recollection to be beguiled by them.

Chance at length befriended me. I had frequently in my ramblings loitered about Hampstead Hill, which is a kind of Parnassus[1] of the metropolis. At such times I occasionally took my dinner at Jack Straw's Castle.[2] It is a country inn so named, the very spot where that notorious rebel and his followers held their council of war. It is a favorite resort of citizens when rurally inclined, as it commands fine fresh air, and a good view of the city. I sat one day in the public room of this inn, ruminating over a beefsteak and a pint of porter, when my imagination kindled up with ancient and heroic images. I had long wanted a theme and a hero; both suddenly broke upon my mind. I determined to write a poem on the history of Jack Straw. I was so full of the subject that I was fearful of being anticipated. I wondered that none of the poets of the day, in their search after ruffian heroes, had ever thought of Jack Straw. I went to work pellmell, blotted several sheets of paper with

[1] A mountain near Delphi in Greece, sacred to Apollo and the nine Muses, who presided over song and the different kinds of poetry; hence, any region of poetry.

[2] A comfortable hostlery and public house on the highest part of Hampstead Heath. Jack Straw was a priest, who, with John Ball of Kent, took a leading part in Wat Tyler's rebellion of 1381, and was executed the same year.

choice floating thoughts, and battles, and descriptions, to be ready at a moment's warning. In a few days' time I sketched out the skeleton of my poem, and nothing was wanting but to give it flesh and blood. I used to take my manuscript and stroll about Caen Wood,[1] and read aloud, and would dine at the Castle, by way of keeping up the vein of thought.

I was there one day, at rather a late hour, in the public room. There was no other company but one man, who sat enjoying his pint of porter at the window, and noticing the passers-by. He was dressed in a green shooting coat. His countenance was strongly marked; he had a hooked nose, a romantic eye, excepting that it had something of a squint, and altogether, as I thought, a poetical style of head. I was quite taken with the man, for you must know I am a little of a physiognomist. I set him down at once for either a poet or a philosopher.

As I like to make new acquaintances, considering every man a volume of human nature, I soon fell into conversation with the stranger, who, I was pleased to find, was by no means difficult of access. After I had dined I joined him at the window, and we became so sociable that I proposed a bottle of wine together, to which he most cheerfully assented.

I was too full of my poem to keep long quiet on the subject, and began to talk about the origin of the tavern, and the history of Jack Straw. I found my new acquaintance to be perfectly at home on the topic, and to jump exactly with my humor in every respect. I became elevated by the wine and the conversation. In the fullness of an author's feelings I told him of my projected poem, and repeated some passages, and he was in raptures. He was evidently of a strong poetical turn.

"Sir," said he, filling my glass at the same time, "our poets don't look at home. I don't see why we need go out of old England for robbers and rebels to write about. I like your Jack Straw, sir; he's a homemade hero. I like him, sir—I like him

[1] Caen Wood, or Kenwood, the superb villa of the Earl of Mansfield, lies between Hampstead and Highgate.

exceedingly. He's English to the backbone — damme — give me honest old England after all! Them's my sentiments, sir."

"I honor your sentiment," cried I, zealously; "it is exactly my own. An English ruffian is as good a ruffian for poetry as any in Italy, or Germany, or the Archipelago;[1] but it is hard to make our poets think so."

"More shame for them!" replied the man in green. "What a plague[2] would they have? What have we to do with their Archipelagos of Italy and Germany? Haven't we heaths and commons and highways on our own little island — ay, and stout fellows to pad the hoof[3] over them too? Stick to home, I say; them's my sentiments. Come sir, my service to you. I agree with you perfectly."

"Poets, in old times, had right notions on this subject," continued I; "witness the fine old ballads about Robin Hood,[4] Allan a'Dale,[4] and other stanch blades of yore."

"Right, sir, right," interrupted he. "Robin Hood! he was the lad to cry "stand" to a man, and never to flinch."

"Ah, sir," said I, "they had famous bands of robbers in the good old times; those were glorious poetical days. The merry crew of Sherwood Forest, who led such a roving, picturesque life 'under the greenwood tree,'—[5] I have often wished to visit

[1] The Grecian Archipelago, or Ægean Sea, that part of the Mediterranean lying between Asia Minor, Greece, and Turkey, and studded with islands.

[2] "What a plague," a mere exclamation, like "what in the world!"

[3] "To pad the hoof," i.e., to travel on foot.

[4] Robin Hood, a famous English outlaw, whose exploits are the subject of many ballads, but of whose actual existence little evidence can be obtained. He is supposed to have been Fitzooth, Earl of Huntingdon (1160–1247), born at Locksley in the reign of Henry II. Having outrun his fortune and being outlawed, he lived as a freebooter, chiefly in the forest of Sherwood in Nottinghamshire. He was a prince among robbers, and is noted for his generosity, personal courage, and skill in archery. Allan-a-Dale was one of Robin Hood's men.

[5] "Under the greenwood tree,
Who loves to lie with me," etc.
Song from Shakespeare's As You Like It, act ii., sc. 5.

their haunts, and tread the scenes of the exploits of Friar Tuck,[1] and Clym of the Clough, and Sir William of Cloudslie." [2]

"Nay, sir," said the gentleman in green, "we have had several very pretty gangs since that day. Those gallant dogs that kept about the great heaths in the neighborhood of London,—about Bagshot, Hounslow, and Blackheath,[3] for instance. Come, sir, my service to you. You don't drink."

"I suppose," cried I, emptying my glass, "I suppose you have heard of the famous Turpin,[4] who was born in this very village of Hampstead, and who used to lurk with his gang in Epping Forest [5] about a hundred years since?"

"Have I?" cried he, "to be sure I have! A hearty old blade that! Sound as pitch! Old Turpentine, as we used to call him. A famous fine fellow, sir."

"Well, sir," continued I, "I have visited Waltham Abbey and Chingford Church merely from the stories I heard when a boy of his exploits there, and I have searched Epping Forest for the cavern where he used to conceal himself. You must know," added I, "that I am a sort of amateur highwayman. They were dashing, daring fellows, the best apologies that we had for the knights-errant of yore. Ah, sir, the country has been sinking gradually into tameness and commonplace. We are losing the old English spirit. The bold knights of the post [6] have all dwin-

[1] The confessor and steward of Robin Hood, self-indulgent, humorous, and somewhat coarse.

[2] Clym of the Clough (Clement of the Cliff) and William of Cloudesley or Cloudeslie were noted outlaws, whose skill in archery rendered them as famous in the north of England as Robin Hood was in the midland counties. Their place of resort was Englewood Forest near Carlisle.

[3] Bagshot, Hounslow, and Blackheath, were three heaths near London, famous resorts of the highwaymen.

[4] Dick Turpin, a noted English highwayman, executed at York for horse stealing, in 1739.

[5] A forest on the outskirts of London. About two miles from the western part of the forest is Waltham Abbey, by the River Lea, and Chingford Church is about four and a half miles from Waltham Abbey.

[6] See Note 1, p. 47.

dled down into lurking footpads and sneaking pickpockets; there's no such thing as a dashing, gentlemanlike robbery committed nowadays on the King's highway. A man may roll from one end of England to the other in a drowsy coach, or jingling post chaise, without any other adventure than that of being occasionally overturned, sleeping in damp sheets, or having an ill-cooked dinner. We hear no more of public coaches being stopped and robbed by a well mounted gang of resolute fellows, with pistols in their hands, and crapes over their faces. What a pretty, poetical incident was it, for example, in domestic life, for a family carriage, on its way to a country seat, to be attacked about dark, the old gentleman eased of his purse and watch, the ladies of their necklaces and earrings, by a politely-spoken highwayman on a blood mare, who afterwards leaped the hedge and galloped across the country, to the admiration of Miss Caroline, the daughter, who would write a long and romantic account of the adventure to her friend, Miss Juliana, in town. Ah, sir, we meet with nothing of such incidents nowadays."

"That, sir," said my companion, taking advantage of a pause, when I stopped to recover breath, and to take a glass of wine which he had just poured out, "that, sir, craving your pardon, is not owing to any want of old English pluck. It is the effect of this cursed system of banking. People do not travel with bags of gold as they did formerly. They have post notes, and drafts on bankers. To rob a coach is like catching a crow, where you have nothing but carrion flesh and feathers for your pains. But a coach in old times, sir, was as rich as a Spanish galleon.[1] It turned out the yellow boys[2] bravely. And a private carriage was a cool[3] hundred or two at least."

[1] A trading vessel of the fifteenth century. The Spanish galleons were usually laden with treasures from the South American countries.

[2] "Yellow boys," an English slang term for gold coins; generally applied to guineas.

[3] A term applied in a vague sense to a sum of money, to give emphasis to the largeness of the amount.

I cannot express how much I was delighted with the sallies of my new acquaintance. He told me that he often frequented the Castle, and would be glad to know more of me; and I proposed to myself many a pleasant afternoon with him, when I should read him my poem as it proceeded, and benefit by his remarks, for it was evident he had the true poetical feeling.

"Come, sir," said he, pushing the bottle; "damme, I like you! you're a man after my own heart. I'm cursed slow in making new acquaintances. One must be on the reserve, you know. But when I meet with a man of your kidney, damme, my heart jumps at once to him. Them's my sentiments, sir. Come, sir, here's Jack Straw's health. I presume one can drink it nowadays without treason!"

"With all my heart," said I, gayly, "and Dick Turpin's into the bargain."

"Ah, sir," said the man in green, "those are the kind of men for poetry. The Newgate Calendar,[1] sir! the Newgate Calendar is your only reading! There's the place to look for bold deeds and dashing fellows."

We were so much pleased with each other that we sat until a late hour. I insisted on paying the bill, for both my purse and my heart were full, and I agreed that he should pay the score at our next meeting. As the coaches had all gone that run between Hampstead and London, we had to return on foot. He was so delighted with the idea of my poem that he could talk of nothing else. He made me repeat such passages as I could remember, and though I did it in a very mangled manner, having a wretched memory, yet he was in raptures.

Every now and then he would break out with some scrap which he would misquote most terribly, would rub his hands and exclaim, "By Jupiter, that's fine, that's noble! Damme, sir, if I can conceive how you hit upon such ideas!"

I must confess I did not always relish his misquotations, which

[1] A list of the prisoners committed to Newgate Prison, London.

sometimes made absolute nonsense of the passages; but what author stands upon trifles when he is praised?

Never had I spent a more delightful evening. I did not perceive how the time flew. I could not bear to separate, but continued walking on, arm in arm with him, past my lodgings, through Camden Town, and across Crackskull Common, talking the whole way about my poem.

When we were half way across the common, he interrupted me in the midst of a quotation by telling me that this had been a famous place for footpads, and was still occasionally infested by them, and that a man had recently been shot there in attempting to defend himself. "The more fool he!" cried I; "a man is an idiot to risk life, or even limb, to save a paltry purse of money. It's quite a different case from that of a duel, where one's honor is concerned. For my part," added I, "I should never think of making resistance against one of those desperadoes."

"Say you so?" cried my friend in green, turning suddenly upon me, and putting a pistol to my breast; "why, then, have at you,[1] my lad! Come—disburse! empty! unsack!"

In a word, I found that the Muse had played me another of her tricks, and had betrayed me into the hands of a footpad. There was no time to parley; he made me turn my pockets inside out, and hearing the sound of distant footsteps, he made one fell swoop upon purse, watch, and all, gave me a thwack on my unlucky pate that laid me sprawling on the ground, and scampered away with his booty.

I saw no more of my friend in green until a year or two afterwards, when I caught sight of his poetical countenance among a crew of scapegraces, heavily ironed, who were on the way for transportation. He recognized me at once, tipped me an impudent wink, and asked me how I came on with the history of Jack Straw's Castle.

The catastrophe at Crackskull Common put an end to my summer's campaign. I was cured of my poetical enthusiasm for

[1] To "have at you" is to try to strike you.

rebels, robbers, and highwaymen. I was put out of conceit of my subject, and, what was worse, I was lightened of my purse, in which was almost every farthing I had in the world. So I abandoned Sir Richard Steele's cottage in despair, and crept into less celebrated, though no less poetical and airy, lodgings in a garret in town.

I now determined to cultivate the society of the literary, and to enroll myself in the fraternity of authorship. It is by the constant collision of mind, thought I, that authors strike out the sparks of genius, and kindle up with glorious conceptions. Poetry is evidently a contagious complaint. I will keep company with poets; who knows but I may catch it as others have done?

I found no difficulty in making a circle of literary acquaintances, not having the sin of success lying at my door; indeed, the failure of my poem was a kind of recommendation to their favor. It is true my new friends were not of the most brilliant names in literature; but then, if you would take their words for it, they were like the prophets of old, men of whom the world was not worthy, and who were to live in future ages, when the ephemeral favorites of the day should be forgotten.

I soon discovered, however, that the more I mingled in literary society, the less I felt capable of writing; that poetry was not so catching as I imagined; and that in familiar life there was often nothing less poetical than a poet. Besides, I wanted the *esprit de corps*[1] to turn these literary fellowships to any account. I could not bring myself to enlist in any particular sect. I saw something to like in them all, but found that would never do, for that the tacit condition on which a man enters into one of these sects is, that he abuses all the rest.

I perceived that there were little knots of authors who lived with, and for, and by, one another. They considered themselves the salt of the earth.[2] They fostered and kept up a conventional

1 The common, animating spirit of a collective body or association.

2 "Salt of the earth," i.e., that portion of a community which has a good influence on the rest (see Matt. v. 13).

vein of thinking, and talking, and joking on all subjects, and they cried each other up to the skies. Each sect had its particular creed, and set up certain authors as divinities, and fell down and worshiped them, and considered every one who did not worship them, or who worshiped any other, as a heretic and an infidel.

In quoting the writers of the day, I generally found them extolling names of which I had scarcely heard, and talking slightingly of others who were the favorites of the public. If I mentioned any recent work from the pen of a first-rate author, they had not read it, — they had not time to read all that was spawned from the press; he wrote too much to write well; and then they would break out into raptures about some Mr. Timson, or Tomson, or Jackson, whose works were neglected at the present day, but who was to be the wonder and delight of posterity. Alas! what heavy debts is this neglectful world daily accumulating on the shoulders of poor posterity.

But, above all, it was edifying to hear with what contempt they would talk of the great. Ye gods! how immeasurably the great are despised by the small fry[1] of literature! It is true, an exception was now and then made of some nobleman, with whom, perhaps, they had casually shaken hands at an election, or hob or nobbed[2] at a public dinner, and was pronounced a "devilish good fellow," and "no humbug;" but, in general, it was enough for a man to have a title, to be the object of their sovereign disdain. You have no idea how poetically and philosophically they would talk of nobility.

For my part, this affected me but little, for though I had no bitterness against the great, and did not think the worse of a man for having innocently been born to a title, yet I did not feel myself at present called upon to resent the indignities poured upon them by the little. But the hostility to the great writers of the day went sore against the grain[3] with me. I could not enter

[1] "Small fry," i.e., insignificant men.

[2] "Hob or nobbed," or "hobnobbed," drank familiarly with.

[3] "Against the grain," i.e., against one's tastes or inclinations.

into such feuds, or participate in such animosities. I had not become author sufficiently to hate other authors. I could still find pleasure in the novelties of the press, and could find it in my heart to praise a contemporary, even though he were successful. Indeed, I was miscellaneous in my taste, and could not confine it to any age or growth of writers. I could turn with delight from the glowing pages of Byron [1] to the cool and polished raillery of Pope,[2] and after wandering among the sacred groves of "Paradise Lost," [3] I could give myself up to voluptuous abandonment in the enchanted bowers of "Lalla Rookh." [4]

"I would have my authors," said I, "as various as my wines, and in relishing the strong and the racy, would never decry the sparkling and exhilarating. Port and sherry are excellent standbys, and so is Madeira, but claret and Burgundy may be drunk now and then without disparagement to one's palate, and champagne is a beverage by no means to be despised."

Such was the tirade I uttered one day when a little flushed with ale at a literary club. I uttered it, too, with something of a flourish, for I thought my simile a clever one. Unluckily, my auditors were men who drank beer and hated Pope; so my figure about wines went for nothing, and my critical toleration was looked upon as downright heterodoxy. In a word, I soon became like a freethinker in religion, an outlaw from every sect, and fair game for all. Such are the melancholy consequences of not hating in literature.

I see you are growing weary, so I will be brief with the residue of my literary career. I will not detain you with a detail of my various attempts to get astride of Pegasus;[5] of the poems I have

[1] See Note 4, p. 131. [2] See Note 3, p. 129.

[3] The greatest work of John Milton, English poet (1608–74).

[4] A poem by Thomas Moore (see Note 5, p. 131). Lalla Rookh is an Eastern story, full of fire and passion.

[5] A winged horse in classical mythology, who, with a blow of the hoofs, caused Hippocrene, the inspiring fountain of the Muses, to spring from Mount Helicon. For this reason he is associated with the idea of poetic

written which were never printed, the plays I have presented which were never performed, and the tracts I have published which were never purchased. It seemed as if booksellers, managers, and the very public, had entered into a conspiracy to starve me. Still I could not prevail upon myself to give up the trial, nor abandon those dreams of renown in which I had indulged. How should I be able to look the literary circle of my native village in the face, if I were so completely to falsify their predictions? For some time longer, therefore, I continued to write for fame, and was, of course, the most miserable dog in existence, besides being in continual risk of starvation. I accumulated loads of literary treasure on my shelves, — loads which were to be treasures to posterity, but, alas! they put not a penny into my purse. What was all this wealth to my present necessities? I could not patch my elbows with an ode, nor satisfy my hunger with blank verse. "Shall a man fill his belly with the east wind?"[1] says the proverb. He may as well do so as with poetry.

I have many a time strolled sorrowfully along, with a sad heart and an empty stomach, about five o'clock, and looked wistfully down the areas in the west end of the town, and seen through the kitchen windows the fires gleaming, and the joints of meat turning on the spits and dripping with gravy, and the cook maids beating up puddings, or trussing turkeys, and felt for the moment that if I could but have the run of one of those kitchens, Apollo and the Muses might have the hungry heights of Parnassus[2] for me. Oh, sir! talk of meditations among the tombs! they are nothing so melancholy as the meditations of a poor devil without penny in pouch, along a line of kitchen windows towards dinner time.

At length, when almost reduced to famine and despair, the idea all at once entered my head that perhaps I was not so clever a fellow as the village and myself had supposed. It was the sal-

inspiration. Hence, "to get astride of Pegasus," to gain poetic inspiration.

[1] See Job xv. 2. [2] See Note 1, p. 140.

vation of me. The moment the idea popped into my brain it brought conviction and comfort with it. I awoke as from a dream; I gave up immortal fame to those who could live on air; took to writing for mere bread; and have ever since had a very tolerable life of it. There is no man of letters so much at his ease, sir, as he who has no character to gain or lose. I had to train myself to it a little, and to clip my wings short at first, or they would have carried me up into poetry in spite of myself. So I determined to begin by the opposite extreme, and abandoning the higher regions of the craft, I came plump down to the lowest, and turned creeper.

"Creeper! and pray what is that?" said I.

"Oh, sir, I see you are ignorant of the language of the craft; a creeper is one who furnishes the newspapers with paragraphs at so much a line, and who goes about in quest of misfortunes, attends the Bow Street Office, the Courts of Justice, and every other den of mischief and iniquity. We are paid at the rate of a penny a line, and as we can sell the same paragraph to almost every paper, we sometimes pick up a very decent day's work. Now and then the Muse is unkind, or the day uncommonly quiet, and then we rather starve; and sometimes the unconscionable editors will clip our paragraphs when they are a little too rhetorical, and snip off twopence or threepence at a go.[1] I have many a time had my pot of porter snipped off my dinner in this way, and have had to dine with dry lips. However, I cannot complain. I rose gradually in the lower ranks of the craft, and am now, I think, in the most comfortable region of literature."

"And pray," said I, "what may you be at present?"

"At present," said he, "I am a regular job writer, and turn my hand to anything. I work up the writings of others at so much a sheet, turn off translations, write second-rate articles to fill up reviews and magazines, compile travels and voyages, and furnish theatrical criticisms for the newspapers. All this authorship, you perceive, is anonymous; it gives me no reputation except among

[1] "At a go," i.e., at a turn.

the trade, where I am considered an author of all work, and am always sure of employ. That's the only reputation I want. I sleep soundly, without dread of duns or critics, and leave immortal fame to those that choose to fret and fight about it. Take my word for it, the only happy author in this world is he who is below the care of reputation."

NOTORIETY.

WHEN we had emerged from the literary nest of honest Dribble, and had passed safely through the dangers of Breakneck Stairs, and the labyrinths of Fleet Market, Buckthorne indulged in many comments upon the peep into literary life which he had furnished me.

I expressed my surprise at finding it so different a world from what I had imagined. "It is always so," said he, "with strangers. The land of literature is a fairyland to those who view it at a distance, but, like all other landscapes, the charm fades on a nearer approach, and the thorns and briars become visible. The republic of letters is the most factious and discordant of all republics, ancient or modern."

"Yet," said I, smiling, "you would not have me take honest Dribble's experience as a view of the land. He is but a mousing owl, a mere groundling.[1] We should have quite a different strain from one of those fortunate authors whom we see sporting about the empyreal heights of fashion, like swallows in the blue sky of a summer's day."

"Perhaps we might," replied he, "but I doubt it. I doubt whether, if any one, even of the most successful, were to tell his actual feelings, you would not find the truth of friend Dribble's philosophy with respect to reputation. One you would find carrying a gay face to the world, while some vulture critic was prey-

[1] One of the common herd.

ing upon his very liver. Another, who was simple enough to mistake fashion for fame, you would find watching countenances, and cultivating invitations, more ambitious to figure in the *beau monde*[1] than the world of letters, and apt to be rendered wretched by the neglect of an illiterate peer or a dissipated duchess. Those who were rising to fame, you would find tormented with anxiety to get higher, and those who had gained the summit, in constant apprehension of a decline.

"Even those who are indifferent to the buzz of notoriety and the farce of fashion are not much better off, being incessantly harassed by intrusions on their leisure and interruptions of their pursuits; for, whatever may be his feelings, when once an author is launched into notoriety, he must go the rounds until the idle curiosity of the day is satisfied, and he is thrown aside to make way for some new caprice. Upon the whole, I do not know but he is most fortunate who engages in the whirl through ambition, however tormenting, as it is doubly irksome to be obliged to join in the game without being interested in the stake.

"There is a constant demand in the fashionable world for novelty; every nine days must have its wonder,[2] no matter of what kind. At one time it is an author, at another, a fire eater, at another, a composer, an Indian juggler, or an Indian chief; a man from the North Pole or the Pyramids; each figures through his brief term of notoriety, and then makes way for the succeeding wonder. You must know that we have oddity fanciers among our ladies of rank, who collect about them all kinds of remarkable beings; fiddlers, statesmen, singers, warriors, artists, philosophers, actors, and poets; every kind of personage, in short, who is noted for something peculiar, so that their routs are like fancy balls, where every one comes 'in character.'

"I have had infinite amusement at these parties in noticing how industriously every one was playing a part, and acting out

1 The fashionable world.

2 "A nine days' wonder" is something that causes a great sensation for a short time and then is forgotten.

of his natural line. There is not a more complete game at cross-purposes[1] than the intercourse of the literary and the great. The fine gentleman is always anxious to be thought a wit, and the wit, a fine gentleman.

"I have noticed a lord endeavoring to look wise and talk learnedly with a man of letters who was aiming at a fashionable air and the tone of a man who had lived about town. The peer quoted a score or two learned authors, with whom he would fain be thought intimate, while the author talked of Sir John this, and Sir Harry that, and extolled the Burgundy he had drunk at Lord Such-a-one's. Each seemed to forget that he could only be interesting to the other in his proper character. Had the peer been merely a man of erudition, the author would never have listened to his prosing; and had the author known all the nobility in the Court Calendar,[2] it would have given him no interest in the eyes of the peer.

"In the same way I have seen a fine lady, remarkable for beauty, weary a philosopher with flimsy metaphysics, while the philosopher put on an awkward air of gallantry, played with her fan, and prattled about the opera. I have heard a sentimental poet talk very stupidly with a statesman about the national debt; and on joining a knot of scientific old gentlemen conversing in a corner, expecting to hear the discussion of some valuable discovery, I found they were only amusing themselves with a fat story."

A PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHER.

THE anecdotes I had heard of Buckthorne's early schoolmate, together with a variety of peculiarities which I had remarked in himself, gave me a strong curiosity to know something of his

[1] A conversational game in which questions and answers are so framed as to involve ludicrous combinations of ideas.

[2] An annual handbook of royal families and their courts.

own history. I am a traveler of the good old school, and am fond of the custom laid down in books, according to which, whenever travelers met, they sat down forthwith, and gave a history of themselves and their adventures. This Buckthorne, too, was a man much to my taste; he had seen the world, and mingled with society, yet retained the strong eccentricities of a man who had lived much alone. There was a careless dash of good humor about him which pleased me exceedingly, and at times an odd tinge of melancholy mingled with his humor, and gave it an additional zest. He was apt to run into long speculations upon society and manners, and to indulge in whimsical views of human nature, yet there was nothing ill-tempered in his satire. It ran more upon the follies than the vices of mankind, and even the follies of his fellow-man were treated with the leniency of one who felt himself to be but frail. He had evidently been a little chilled and buffeted by fortune without being soured thereby, as some fruits become mellower and more generous in their flavor from having been bruised and frost-bitten.

I have always had a great relish for the conversation of practical philosophers of this stamp, who have profited by the "sweet uses of adversity"[1] without imbibing its bitterness; who have learned to estimate the world rightly, yet good-humoredly; and who, while they perceive the truth of the saying that "all is vanity,"[2] are yet able to do so without vexation of spirit.

Such a man was Buckthorne; in general, a laughing philosopher, and if at any time a shade of sadness stole across his brow, it was but transient, like a summer cloud, which soon goes by, and freshens and revives the fields over which it passes.

I was walking with him one day in Kensington Gardens,[3] for he was a knowing epicure in all the cheap pleasures and rural haunts within reach of the metropolis. It was a delightful, warm

1 See Shakespeare's As You Like It, act ii., sc. 1.

2 See Eccles. xii. 8.

3 Kensington Gardens, in London, are to the north of Hyde Park, and are noted for their avenues of majestic old trees.

morning in spring, and he was in the happy mood of a pastoral citizen, when just turned loose into grass and sunshine. He had been watching a lark which, rising from a bed of daisies and yellow cups, had sung his way up to a bright, snowy cloud floating in the deep blue sky.

"Of all birds," said he, "I should like to be a lark. He revels in the brightest time of the day, in the happiest season of the year, among fresh meadows and opening flowers; and when he has sated himself with the sweetness of earth, he wings his flight up to heaven, as if he would drink in the melody of the morning stars. Hark to that note! How it comes thrilling down upon the ear! What a stream of music, note falling over note, in delicious cadence! Who would trouble his head about operas and concerts when he could walk in the fields and hear such music for nothing? These are the enjoyments which set riches at scorn, and make even a poor man independent:

> "'I care not, Fortune, what you me deny:
> You cannot rob me of free Nature's grace,
> You cannot shut the windows of the sky
> Through which Aurora shows her brightening face;
> You cannot bar my constant feet to trace
> The woods and lawns by living stream, at eve.'[1]

"Sir, there are homilies in Nature's works worth all the wisdom of the schools, if we could but read them rightly, and one of the pleasantest lessons I ever received in time of trouble was from hearing the notes of the lark."

I profited by this communicative vein to intimate to Buckthorne a wish to know something of the events of his life, which I fancied must have been an eventful one.

He smiled when I expressed my desire. "I have no great story," said he, "to relate. A mere tissue of errors and follies. But, such as it is, you shall have one epoch of it, by which you may judge of the rest." And so, without any further prelude, he gave me the following anecdotes of his early adventures.

[1] Thomson's Castle of Indolence, Canto II., stanza 3.

BUCKTHORNE, OR THE YOUNG MAN OF GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

I WAS born to very little property, but to great expectations, which is, perhaps, one of the most unlucky fortunes a man can be born to. My father was a country gentleman, the last of a very ancient and honorable, but decayed, family, and resided in an old hunting lodge in Warwickshire. He was a keen sportsman, and lived to the extent of his moderate income, so that I had little to expect from that quarter; but then I had a rich uncle by the mother's side, a penurious, accumulating curmudgeon, who, it was confidently expected, would make me his heir, because he was an old bachelor, because I was named after him, and because he hated all the world except myself.

He was, in fact, an inveterate hater, a miser even in misanthropy, and hoarded up a grudge as he did a guinea. Thus, though my mother was an only sister, he had never forgiven her marriage with my father, against whom he had a cold, still, immovable pique, which had lain at the bottom of his heart, like a stone in a well, ever since they had been schoolboys together. My mother, however, considered me as the intermediate being that was to bring everything again into harmony, for she looked upon me as a prodigy, God bless her! My heart overflows whenever I recall her tenderness. She was the most excellent, the most indulgent of mothers. I was her only child. It was a pity she had no more, for she had fondness of heart enough to have spoiled a dozen.

I was sent at an early age to a public school, sorely against my mother's wishes; but my father insisted that it was the only way to make boys hardy. The school was kept by a conscientious prig of the ancient system, who did his duty by the boys intrusted to his care,—that is to say, we were flogged soundly when we did not get our lessons. We were put in classes, and

thus flogged on in droves along the highway of knowledge, in much the same manner as cattle are driven to market, where those that are heavy in gait or short in leg have to suffer for the superior alertness or longer limbs of their companions.

For my part, — I confess it with shame, — I was an incorrigible laggard. I have always had the poetical feeling; that is to say, I have always been an idle fellow, and prone to play the vagabond. I used to get away from my books and school whenever I could, and ramble about the fields. I was surrounded by seductions for such a temperament. The schoolhouse was an old-fashioned, whitewashed mansion, of wood and plaster, standing on the skirts of a beautiful village. Close by it was the venerable church, with a tall Gothic spire; before it spread a lovely green valley, with a little stream glistening along through willow groves; while a line of blue hills bounding the landscape gave rise to many a summer-day dream as to the fairyland that lay beyond.

In spite of all the scourgings I suffered at that school to make me love my book, I cannot but look back upon the place with fondness. Indeed, I considered this frequent flagellation as the common lot of humanity, and the regular mode in which scholars were made.

My kind mother used to lament over my details of the sore trials I underwent in the cause of learning, but my father turned a deaf ear to her expostulations. He had been flogged through school himself, and he swore there was no other way of making a man of parts;[1] though, let me speak it with all due reverence, my father was but an indifferent illustration of his theory, for he was considered a grievous blockhead.

My poetical temperament evinced itself at a very early period. The village church was attended every Sunday by a neighboring squire, the lord of the manor, whose park stretched quite to the village, and whose spacious country seat seemed to take the church under its protection. Indeed, you would have thought the church had been consecrated to him instead of to the Deity.

[1] "A man of parts," i.e., an able man.

The parish clerk bowed low before him, and the vergers humbled themselves unto the dust in his presence. He always entered a little late, and with some stir, striking his cane emphatically on the ground, swaying his hat in his hand, and looking loftily to the right and left as he walked slowly up the aisle; and the parson, who always ate his Sunday dinner with him, never commenced service until he appeared. He sat with his family in a large pew, gorgeously lined, humbling himself devoutly on velvet cushions, and reading lessons of meekness and lowliness of spirit out of splendid gold and morocco prayer books. Whenever the parson spoke of the difficulty of a rich man's entering the kingdom of heaven, the eyes of the congregation would turn towards the "grand pew," and I thought the squire seemed pleased with the application.

The pomp of this pew, and the aristocratical air of the family struck my imagination wonderfully, and I fell desperately in love with a little daughter of the squire's, about twelve years of age. This freak of fancy made me more truant from my studies than ever. I used to stroll about the squire's park, and lurk near the house, to catch glimpses of this damsel at the windows, or playing about the lawn, or walking out with her governess.

I had not enterprise nor impudence enough to venture from my concealment. Indeed, I felt like an arrant poacher, until I read one or two of Ovid's Metamorphoses,[1] when I pictured myself as some sylvan deity,[2] and she a coy wood nymph of whom I was in pursuit. There is something extremely delicious in these early awakenings of the tender passion. I can feel even at this moment the throbbing in my boyish bosom, whenever by chance

[1] Ovid, Publius Ovidius Naso (43 B.C.–A.D.17), a great Roman poet. His best known work is the Metamorphoses, which professed to show the relation of the gods to human affairs; but it deals mostly with the love adventures of the gods with nymphs, etc.

[2] In Greek and Roman mythology the forests were inhabited by gods and nymphs, who were characterized by riotous merriment, and represented as half goat, half man.

I caught a glimpse of her white frock fluttering among the shrubbery. I carried about in my bosom a volume of Waller,[1] which I had purloined from my mother's library, and I applied to my little fair one all the compliments lavished upon Sacharissa.[2]

At length I danced with her at a school ball. I was so awkward a booby that I dared scarcely speak to her; I was filled with awe and embarrassment in her presence; but I was so inspired that my poetical temperament for the first time broke out in verse, and I fabricated some glowing rhymes, in which I berhymed the little lady under the favorite name of Sacharissa. I slipped the verses, trembling and blushing, into her hand the next Sunday as she came out of church. The little prude handed them to her mamma, the mamma handed them to the squire, the squire, who had no soul for poetry, sent them in dudgeon to the schoolmaster, and the schoolmaster, with a barbarity worthy of the dark ages,[3] gave me a sound and peculiarly humiliating flogging for thus trespassing upon Parnassus. This was a sad outset for a votary of the Muse;[4] it ought to have cured me of my passion for poetry; but it only confirmed it, for I felt the spirit of a martyr rising within me. What was as well, perhaps, it cured me of my passion for the young lady, for I felt so indignant at the ignominious horsing[5] I had incurred in celebrating her charms, that I could not hold up my head in church. Fortunately for my wounded sensibility, the midsummer holidays came on, and I returned home. My mother, as usual, inquired into all my school concerns, my little pleasures, and cares, and sorrows; for boyhood has its share of the one as well as of the other. I told

[1] Edmund Waller (1605–87), an English poet noted for the refinement of his style.

[2] Sacharissa ("Miss Sugar") was a name bestowed by Waller on Lady Dorothea Sidney, eldest daughter of the Earl of Leicester, for whose hand he was an unsuccessful suitor.

[3] "The dark ages," i.e., a period of obscurity and stagnation in literature and art, lasting nearly a thousand years (500 to 1500).

[4] "Votary of the Muse," i.e., one devoted to poetry.

[5] Flogging.

her all, and she was indignant at the treatment I had experienced. She fired up at the arrogance of the squire and the prudery of the daughter, and, as to the schoolmaster, she wondered where was the use of having schoolmasters, and why boys could not remain at home and be educated by tutors, under the eye of their mothers. She asked to see the verses I had written, and she was delighted with them, for, to confess the truth, she had a pretty taste for poetry. She even showed them to the parson's wife, who protested they were charming, and the parson's three daughters insisted on each having a copy of them.

All this was exceedingly balsamic; and I was still more consoled and encouraged when the young ladies, who were the bluestockings of the neighborhood, and had read Dr. Johnson's Lives[1] quite through, assured my mother that great geniuses never studied, but were always idle, upon which I began to surmise that I was myself something out of the common run. My father, however, was of a very different opinion, for when my mother, in the pride of her heart, showed him my copy of verses, he threw them out of the window, asking her if she meant "to make a ballad monger of the boy?" But he was a careless, common-thinking man, and I cannot say that I ever loved him much; my mother absorbed all my filial affection.

I used occasionally, on holidays, to be sent on short visits to the uncle who was to make me his heir. They thought it would keep me in his mind, and render him fond of me. He was a withered, anxious-looking old fellow, and lived in a desolate old country seat, which he suffered to go to ruin from absolute niggardliness. He kept but one man servant, who had lived, or rather starved, with him for years. No woman was allowed to sleep in the house. A daughter of the old servant lived by the gate, in what had been a porter's lodge, and was permitted to come into the house about an hour each day, to make the beds and cook a morsel of provisions. The park that surrounded the house was all run wild; the trees were grown out of shape; the

[1] Johnson's Lives of the English Poets (see Note 1, p. 129).

fish ponds stagnant; the urns and statues fallen from their pedestals, and buried among the rank grass. The hares and pheasants were so little molested, except by poachers, that they bred in great abundance, and sported about the rough lawns and weedy avenues. To guard the premises, and frighten off robbers, of whom he was somewhat apprehensive, and visitors, of whom he was in almost equal awe, my uncle kept two or three bloodhounds, who were always prowling round the house, and were the dread of the neighboring peasantry. They were gaunt and half starved, seemed ready to devour one from mere hunger, and were an effectual check on any stranger's approach to this wizard castle.

Such was my uncle's house, which I used to visit now and then during the holidays. I was, as I before said, the old man's favorite; that is to say, he did not hate me so much as he did the rest of the world. I had been apprised of his character, and cautioned to cultivate his good will; but I was too young and careless to be a courtier, and, indeed, have never been sufficiently studious of my interests to let them govern my feelings. However, we jogged on very well together, and as my visits cost him almost nothing, they did not seem to be very unwelcome. I brought with me my fishing rod, and half supplied the table from the fish ponds.

Our meals were solitary and unsocial. My uncle rarely spoke; he pointed to whatever he wanted, and the servant perfectly understood him. Indeed, his man John, or "Iron John," as he was called in the neighborhood, was a counterpart of his master. He was a tall, bony old fellow, with a dry wig that seemed made of cow's tail, and a face as tough as though it had been made of cow's hide. He was generally clad in a long, patched, livery coat, taken out of the wardrobe of the house, and which bagged loosely about him, having evidently belonged to some corpulent predecessor in the more plenteous days of the mansion. From long habits of taciturnity, the hinges of his jaws seemed to have grown absolutely rusty, and it cost him as much effort to set

them ajar, and to let out a tolerable sentence, as it would have done to set open the iron gates of the park, and let out the old family carriage that was dropping to pieces in the coach house.

I cannot say, however, but that I was for some time amused with my uncle's peculiarities. Even the very desolateness of the establishment had something in it that hit my fancy. When the weather was fine I used to amuse myself in a solitary way, by rambling about the park, and coursing like a colt across its lawns. The hares and pheasants seemed to stare with surprise to see a human being walking these forbidden grounds by daylight. Sometimes I amused myself by jerking stones, or shooting at birds with a bow and arrows, for to have used a gun would have been treason. Now and then my path was crossed by a little red-headed, ragged-tailed urchin, the son of the woman at the lodge, who ran wild about the premises. I tried to draw him into familiarity, and to make a companion of him, but he seemed to have imbibed the strange, unsociable character of everything around him, and always kept aloof; so I considered him as another Orson,[1] and amused myself with shooting at him with my bow and arrows, and he would hold up his breeches with one hand, and scamper away like a deer.

There was something in all this loneliness and wildness strangely pleasing to me. The great stables, empty and weather broken, with the names of favorite horses over the vacant stalls; the windows, bricked and boarded up; the broken roofs, garrisoned by rooks and jackdaws,—all had a singularly forlorn appearance. One would have concluded the house to be totally uninhabited

[1] One of the heroes in the old French romance of Valentine and Orson. Bellisant, wife of Alexander, Emperor of Constantinople, being banished by her husband, took refuge in a forest near Orleans, where she became the mother of the twins, Valentine and Orson. Valentine was taken away by his uncle, King Pepin of France; but Orson was carried off by a bear, which suckled him with its cubs. As he grew up, he became the terror of France, and was called the "Wild Man of the Forest." Ultimately he was reclaimed by his brother Valentine.

were it not for the little thread of blue smoke which now and then curled up, like a corkscrew, from the center of one of the wide chimneys where my uncle's starveling meal was cooking.

My uncle's room was in a remote corner of the building, strongly secured, and generally locked. I was never admitted into this stronghold, where the old man would remain for the greater part of the time, drawn up, like a veteran spider, in the citadel of his web. The rest of the mansion, however, was open to me, and I wandered about it unconstrained. The damp and rain, which beat in through the broken windows, crumbled the paper from the walls, moldered the pictures, and gradually destroyed the furniture. I loved to roam about the wide, waste chambers in bad weather, and listen to the howling of the wind, and the banging about of the doors and window shutters. I pleased myself with the idea of how completely, when I came to the estate, I would renovate all things, and make the old building ring with merriment, till it was astonished at its own jocundity.

The chamber which I occupied on these visits had been my mother's when a girl. There was still the toilet table of her own adorning, the landscapes of her own drawing. She had never seen it since her marriage, but would often ask me if everything was still the same. All was just the same, for I loved that chamber on her account, and had taken pains to put everything in order, and to mend all the flaws in the windows with my own hands. I anticipated the time when I should once more welcome her to the house of her fathers, and restore her to this little nestling place of her childhood.

At length my evil genius — or what, perhaps, is the same thing, the Muse — inspired me with the notion of rhyming again. My uncle, who never went to church, used on Sundays to read chapters out of the Bible; and Iron John, the woman from the lodge, and myself, were his congregation. It seemed to be all one to him what he read, so long as it was something from the Bible. Sometimes, therefore, it would be the Song of Solomon, and this withered anatomy would read about being stayed with flagons,

and comforted with apples, for he was sick of love.[1] Sometimes he would hobble, with spectacles on nose, through whole chapters of hard Hebrew names in Deuteronomy,[2] at which the poor woman would sigh and groan, as if wonderfully moved. His favorite book, however, was "The Pilgrim's Progress,"[3] and when he came to that part which treats of Doubting Castle and Giant Despair, I thought invariably of him in his desolate old country seat. So much did the idea amuse me that I took to scribbling about it under the trees in the park, and in a few days had made some progress in a poem in which I had given a description of the place, under the name of Doubting Castle, and personified my uncle as Giant Despair.

I lost my poem somewhere about the house, and I soon suspected that my uncle had found it, as he harshly intimated to me that I could return home, and that I need not come and see him again till he should send for me.

Just about this time my mother died. I cannot dwell upon the circumstance. My heart, careless and wayward as it is, gushes with the recollection. Her death was an event that perhaps gave a turn to all my after fortunes. With her died all that made home attractive. I had no longer anybody whom I was ambitious to please, or fearful to offend. My father was a good kind of a man in his way, but he had bad maxims in education, and we differed in material points. It makes a vast difference in opinion about the utility of the rod, which end happens to fall to one's share. I never could be brought into my father's way of thinking on the subject.

[1] See Song of Solomon ii. 5.

[2] The fifth book of the Old Testament.

[3] A religious allegory written by John Bunyan (1628–88). He describes the journey of the pilgrim Christian from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. On his way the pilgrim encounters the Giant Despair, who lives in Doubting Castle. Finding Christian and his companion Hopeful asleep, the giant locks them up in his dungeon, where they are detained and cruelly treated till Christian unlocks the door with a key called Promise, and they make their escape.

I now, therefore, began to grow very impatient of remaining at school, to be flogged for things that I did not like. I longed for variety, especially now that I had not my uncle's house to resort to, by way of diversifying the dullness of school with the dreariness of his country seat.

I was now almost seventeen, tall for my age, and full of idle fancies. I had a roving, inextinguishable desire to see different kinds of life, and different orders of society, and this vagrant humor had been fostered in me by Tom Dribble, the prime wag and great genius of the school, who had all the rambling propensities of a poet.

I used to sit at my desk in the school, on a fine summer's day, and, instead of studying the book which lay open before me, my eye was gazing through the windows on the green fields and blue hills. How I envied the happy groups on the tops of stagecoaches, chatting, and joking, and laughing, as they were whirled by the schoolhouse on their way to the metropolis! Even the wagoners trudging along beside their ponderous teams, and traversing the kingdom from one end to the other, were objects of envy to me. I fancied to myself what adventures they must experience, and what odd scenes of life they must witness. All this was, doubtless, the poetical temperament working within me, and tempting me forth into a world of its own creation, which I mistook for the world of real life.

While my mother lived, this strong propensity to rove was counteracted by the stronger attractions of home, and by the powerful ties of affection which drew me to her side; but now that she was gone, the attraction had ceased; the ties were severed. I had no longer an anchorage ground for my heart, but was at the mercy of every vagrant impulse. Nothing but the narrow allowance on which my father kept me, and the consequent penury of my purse, prevented me from mounting to the top of a stagecoach, and launching myself adrift on the great ocean of life.

Just about this time, the village was agitated for a day or two by the passing through of several caravans, containing wild

beasts and other spectacles, for a great fair annually held at a neighboring town.

I had never seen a fair of any consequence, and my curiosity was powerfully awakened by this bustle of preparation. I gazed with respect and wonder at the vagrant personages who accompanied these caravans. I loitered about the village inn, listening with curiosity and delight to the slang talk and cant jokes of the showmen and their followers, and I felt an eager desire to witness this fair which my fancy decked out as something wonderfully fine.

A holiday afternoon presented when I could be absent from noon until evening. A wagon was going from the village to the fair. I could not resist the temptation, nor the eloquence of Tom Dribble, who was a truant to the very heart's core. We hired seats, and set off full of boyish expectation. I promised myself that I would but take a peep at the land of promise, and hasten back again before my absence should be noticed.

Heavens! how happy I was on arriving at the fair! How I was enchanted with the world of fun and pageantry around me! The humors of Punch,[1] the feats of the equestrians, the magical tricks of the conjurors. But what principally caught my attention was an itinerant theater, where a tragedy, pantomime,[2] and farce, were all acted in the course of half an hour, and more of the *dramatis personæ*[3] murdered than at Drury Lane[4] or Covent Garden[5] in the course of a whole evening. I have since seen many a play performed by the best actors in the world, but never have I derived half the delight from any that I did from this first representation.

There was a ferocious tyrant in a skullcap like an inverted

[1] A humorous character of a puppet show, exhibited in places of popular resort. He is represented as short and fat, with a hump on his back.

[2] A dramatic and spectacular entertainment, of which dumb acting as well as burlesque dialogue and dancing by clown, harlequin, etc., are features.

[3] The actors in a play.

[4] A famous theater in London, of which David Garrick was once manager.

[5] An old theater in Covent Garden, London, built in 1732.

porringer, and a dress of red baize, magnificently embroidered with gilt leather, with his face so bewhiskered, and his eyebrows so knit and expanded with burnt cork, that he made my heart quake within me as he stamped about the little stage. I was enraptured, too, with the surpassing beauty of a distressed damsel in a faded pink silk and dirty white muslin, whom he held in cruel captivity by way of gaining her affections, and who wept and wrung her hands, and flourished a ragged white handkerchief from the top of an impregnable tower of the size of a bandbox.

Even after I had come out from the play I could not tear myself from the vicinity of the theater, but lingered, gazing, and wondering, and laughing at the *dramatis personæ* as they performed their antics, or danced upon a stage in front of the booth, to decoy a new set of spectators.

I was so bewildered by the scene, and so lost in the crowd of sensations that kept swarming upon me, that I was like one entranced. I lost my companion, Tom Dribble, in a tumult and scuffle that took place near one of the shows; but I was too much occupied in mind to think long about him. I strolled about until dark, when the fair was lighted up, and a new scene of magic opened upon me. The illumination of the tents and booths, the brilliant effect of the stages decorated with lamps, with dramatic groups flaunting about them in gaudy dresses, contrasted splendidly with the surrounding darkness, while the uproar of drums, trumpets, fiddles, hautboys,[1] and cymbals, mingled with the harangues of the showmen, the squeaking of Punch, and the shouts and laughter of the crowd, all united to complete my giddy distraction.

Time flew without my perceiving it. When I came to myself and thought of the school, I hastened to return. I inquired for the wagon in which I had come; it had been gone for hours. I asked the time; it was almost midnight. A sudden quaking seized me. How was I to get back to school? I was too weary to make the journey on foot, and I knew not where to

[1] Wind instruments, similar in shape to the clarinet.

apply for a conveyance. Even if I should find one, could I venture to disturb the schoolhouse long after midnight,—to arouse that sleeping lion the usher in the very midst of his night's rest? The idea was too dreadful for a delinquent schoolboy. All the horrors of return rushed upon me. My absence must long before this have been remarked; and absent for a whole night! —a deed of darkness not easily to be expiated. The rod of the pedagogue budded forth into tenfold terrors before my affrighted fancy. I pictured to myself punishment and humiliation in every variety of form, and my heart sickened at the picture. Alas! how often are the petty ills of boyhood as painful to our tender natures as are the sterner evils of manhood to our robuster minds.

I wandered about among the booths, and I might have derived a lesson from my actual feelings, how much the charms of this world depend upon ourselves, for I no longer saw anything gay or delightful in the revelry around me. At length I lay down, wearied and perplexed, behind one of the large tents, and, covering myself with the margin of the tent cloth to keep off the night chill, I soon fell asleep.

I had not slept long when I was awakened by the noise of merriment within an adjoining booth. It was the itinerant theater, rudely constructed of boards and canvas. I peeped through an aperture, and saw the whole *dramatis personæ*, tragedy, comedy, and pantomime, all refreshing themselves after the final dismissal of their auditors. They were merry and gamesome, and made the flimsy theater ring with their laughter. I was astonished to see the tragedy tyrant in red baize and fierce whiskers, who had made my heart quake as he strutted about the boards, now transformed into a fat, good-humored fellow, the beaming porringer[1] laid aside from his brow, and his jolly face washed from all the terrors of burnt cork. I was delighted, too, to see the distressed damsel in faded silk and dirty muslin, who had trembled under his tyranny, and afflicted me so much by her sorrows, now seated familiarly on his knee, and quaffing from

[1] A headdress shaped like a porringer or porridge dish; so called in jest.

the same tankard. Harlequin [1] lay asleep on one of the benches, and monks, satyrs,[2] and vestal virgins [3] were grouped together, laughing outrageously at a broad story told by an unhappy count, who had been barbarously murdered in the tragedy.

This was, indeed, novelty to me. It was a peep into another planet. I gazed and listened with intense curiosity and enjoyment. They had a thousand odd stories and jokes about the events of the day, and burlesque descriptions and mimickings of the spectators who had been admiring them. Their conversation was full of allusions to their adventures at different places where they had exhibited, the characters they had met with in different villages, and the ludicrous difficulties in which they had occasionally been involved. All past cares and troubles were now turned by these thoughtless beings into matters of merriment, and made to contribute to the gayety of the moment. They had been moving from fair to fair about the kingdom, and were the next morning to set out on their way to London. My resolution was taken. I stole from my nest, and crept through a hedge into a neighboring field, where I went to work to make a tatterdemalion [4] of myself. I tore my clothes, soiled them with dirt, begrimed my face and hands, and crawling near one of the booths, purloined an old hat, and left my new one in its place. It was an honest theft, and I hope may not hereafter rise up in judgment against me.

I now ventured to the scene of merrymaking, and presenting myself before the dramatic corps, offered myself as a volunteer.

[1] Harlequin, in the British pantomime, is a sprite supposed to be invisible to all eyes but those of his faithful Columbine, with whom he is in love. His office is to dance through the world and frustrate all the knavish tricks of the clown, who also is in love with Columbine.

[2] Forest gods among the Greeks and Romans, half goat and half man (see Note 2, p. 159).

[3] Among the ancient Romans, vestal virgins were consecrated to Vesta, goddess of the hearth, and watched the sacred fire kept forever burning on her altar.

[4] Ragged fellow.

I felt terribly agitated and abashed, for never before "stood I in such a presence." I had addressed myself to the manager of the company. He was a fat man, dressed in dirty white, with a red sash fringed with tinsel swathed round his body; his face was smeared with paint, and a majestic plume towered from an old spangled black bonnet. He was the Jupiter Tonans[1] of this Olympus,[2] and was surrounded by the inferior gods and goddesses of his court. He sat on the end of a bench by a table, with one arm akimbo, and the other extended to the handle of a tankard, which he had slowly set down from his lips, as he surveyed me from head to foot. It was a moment of awful scrutiny, and I fancied the groups around all watching as in silent suspense, and waiting for the imperial nod.

He questioned me as to who I was, what were my qualifications, and what terms I expected. I passed myself off for a discharged servant from a gentleman's family, and as, happily, one does not require a special recommendation to get admitted into bad company, the questions on that head were easily satisfied. As to my accomplishments, I could spout a little poetry, and knew several scenes of plays, which I had learned at school exhibitions; I could dance. That was enough. No further questions were asked me as to accomplishments. It was the very thing they wanted; and as I asked no wages but merely meat and drink, and safe conduct about the world, a bargain was struck in a moment.

Behold me, therefore, transformed in a sudden from a gentleman student to a dancing buffoon, for such, in fact, was the character in which I made my *début.* I was one of those who formed the groups in the dramas, and was principally employed on the stage in front of the booth to attract company. I was equipped

[1] Jupiter, the chief god of the Romans, was worshiped as the god of rain, storms, thunder, etc. As god of thunder he bore the epithet "Jupiter Tonans."

[2] Mount Olympus of Greece, on the confines of Macedonia and Thessaly, where the court of Jupiter was supposed to have been held.

as a satyr, in a dress of drab frieze [1] that fitted to my shape, with a great laughing mask, ornamented with huge ears and short horns. I was pleased with the disguise, because it kept me from the danger of being discovered whilst we were in that part of the country; and as I had merely to dance and make antics, the character was favorable to a *débutant*, being almost on a par with Snug's [2] part of the lion, which required nothing but roaring.

I cannot tell you how happy I was at this sudden change in my situation. I felt no degradation, for I had seen too little of society to be thoughtful about the difference of rank, and a boy of sixteen is seldom aristocratical. I had given up no friend, for there seemed to be no one in the world that cared for me, now that my poor mother was dead; I had given up no pleasure, for my pleasure was to ramble about and indulge the flow of a poetical imagination, and I now enjoyed it in perfection. There is no life so truly poetical as that of a dancing buffoon.

It may be said that all this argued groveling inclinations. I do not think so. Not that I mean to vindicate myself in any great degree; I know too well what a whimsical compound I am; but in this instance I was seduced by no love of low company, nor disposition to indulge in low vices. I have always despised the brutally vulgar, and had a disgust at vice, whether in high or low life. I was governed merely by a sudden and thoughtless impulse. I had no idea of resorting to this profession as a mode of life, or of attaching myself to these people as my future class of society. I thought merely of a temporary gratification to my curiosity, and an indulgence of my humors. I had already a strong relish for the peculiarities of character and the varieties of situation, and I have always been fond of the

[1] A coarse woolen cloth, with a tufted (friezed) nap on one side.

[2] A character in Shakespeare's A Midsummer-Night's Dream. A play is arranged by the citizens of Athens for the occasion of the marriage of the Duke. Snug the joiner, who is slow of learning, is assigned the lion's part, which requires nothing but roaring (see A Midsummer-Night's Dream, act i., sc. 2).

comedy of life, and desirous of seeing it through all its shifting scenes.

In mingling, therefore, among mountebanks and buffoons, I was protected by the very vivacity of imagination which had led me among them. I moved about, enveloped, as it were, in a protecting delusion, which my fancy spread around me. I assimilated to these people only as they struck me poetically; their whimsical ways and a certain picturesqueness in their mode of life entertained me; but I was neither amused nor corrupted by their vices. In short, I mingled among them, as Prince Hal[1] did among his graceless associates, merely to gratify my humor.

I did not investigate my motives in this manner at the time, for I was too careless and thoughtless to reason about the matter; but I do so now, when I look back with trembling to think of the ordeal to which I unthinkingly exposed myself, and the manner in which I passed through it. Nothing, I am convinced, but the poetical temperament, that hurried me into the scrape, brought me out of it without my becoming an arrant vagabond.

Full of the enjoyment of the moment, giddy with the wildness of animal spirits, so rapturous in a boy, I capered, I danced, I played a thousand fantastic tricks about the stage in the villages in which we exhibited, and I was universally pronounced the most agreeable monster that had ever been seen in those parts. My disappearance from school had awakened my father's anxiety, for I one day heard a description of myself cried before the very booth in which I was exhibiting, with the offer of a reward for any intelligence of me. I had no great scruple about letting my father suffer a little uneasiness on my account; it would pun-

[1] Prince Hal (1388–1422), son of King Henry IV. of England, mingled with low company in taverns and was a reckless youth; but he felt secure in the thought that he could at any time leave his common associates and assume the duties of his true rank. When he became king he threw off his dissipated habits, and Henry V. proved one of England's wisest and greatest kings (see Shakespeare's Henry IV., Part i., act i., sc. 2).

ish him for past indifference, and would make him value me the more when he found me again.

I have wondered that some of my comrades did not recognize me in the stray sheep that was cried; but they were all, no doubt, occupied by their own concerns. They were all laboring seriously in their antic vocation; for folly was a mere trade with most of them, and they often grinned and capered with heavy hearts. With me, on the contrary, it was all real. I acted *con amore*,[1] and rattled and laughed from the irrepressible gayety of my spirits. It is true that, now and then, I started and looked grave on receiving a sudden thwack from the wooden sword of Harlequin in the course of my gambols, as it brought to mind the birch of my schoolmaster; but I soon got accustomed to it, and bore all the cuffing, and kicking, and tumbling about, which form the practical wit of your itinerant pantomime, with a good humor that made me a prodigious favorite.

The country campaign of the troop was soon at an end, and we set off for the metropolis, to perform at the fairs which are held in its vicinity. The greater part of our theatrical property was sent on direct, to be in a state of preparation for the opening of the fairs, while a detachment of the company traveled slowly on, foraging among the villages. I was amused with the desultory, haphazard kind of life we led; here to-day and gone to-morrow; sometimes reveling in alehouses, sometimes feasting under hedges in the green fields. When audiences were crowded, and business profitable, we fared well, and when otherwise, we fared scantily, consoled ourselves, and made up with anticipations of the next day's success.

At length the increasing frequency of coaches hurrying past us, covered with passengers; the increasing number of carriages, carts, wagons, gigs, droves of cattle and flocks of sheep, all thronging the road; the snug country boxes with trim flower gardens, twelve feet square, and their trees twelve feet high, all powdered with dust; and the innumerable seminaries for young

[1] Literally, "with love;" hence, earnestly.

ladies and gentlemen, situated along the road for the benefit of country air and rural retirement,—all these insignia announced that the mighty London was at hand. The hurry, and the crowd, and the bustle, and the noise, and the dust, increased as we proceeded, until I saw the great cloud of smoke hanging in the air, like a canopy of state over this queen of cities.

In this way, then, did I enter the metropolis, a strolling vagabond, on the top of a caravan, with a crew of vagabonds about me; but I was as happy as a prince, for, like Prince Hal, I felt myself superior to my situation, and knew that I could at any time cast it off, and emerge into my proper sphere.

How my eyes sparkled as we passed Hyde Park Corner,[1] and I saw splendid equipages rolling by, with powdered footmen behind, in rich liveries, with fine nosegays, and gold-headed canes, and with lovely women within, so sumptuously dressed, and so surpassingly fair! I was always extremely sensible to female beauty, and here I saw it in all its powers of fascination; for whatever may be said of "beauty unadorned,"[2] there is something almost awful in female loveliness decked out in jeweled state. The swanlike neck encircled with diamonds, the raven locks clustered with pearls, the ruby glowing on the snowy bosom, are objects which I could never contemplate without emotion; and a dazzling white arm clasped with bracelets, and taper, transparent fingers, laden with sparkling rings, are to me irresistible.

My very eyes ached as I gazed at the high and courtly beauty before me. It surpassed all that my imagination had conceived of the sex. I shrank for a moment into shame at the company in which I was placed, and repined at the vast distance that seemed to intervene between me and these magnificent beings.

I forbear to give a detail of the happy life I led about the

[1] One of the entrances to Hyde Park, a gay and fashionable quarter in London.

[2] "Loveliness needs not the foreign aid of ornament, but is, when unadorned, adorned the most."—THOMSON'S *Seasons*—Autumn.

skirts of the metropolis, playing at the various fairs held there during the latter part of spring, and the beginning of summer. This continued change from place to place, and scene to scene, fed my imagination with novelties, and kept my spirits in a perpetual state of excitement. As I was tall of my age, I aspired, at one time, to play heroes in tragedy; but, after two or three trials, I was pronounced by the manager totally unfit for the line, and our first tragic actress, who was a large woman, and held a small hero in abhorrence, confirmed his decision.

The fact is, I had attempted to give point to language which had no point, and nature to scenes which had no nature. They said I did not fill out my characters, and they were right. The characters had all been prepared for a different sort of man. Our tragedy hero was a round, robustious fellow, with an amazing voice, who stamped and slapped his breast until his wig shook again, and who roared and bellowed out his bombast until every phrase swelled upon the ear like the sound of a kettledrum. I might as well have attempted to fill out his clothes as his characters. When we had a dialogue together, I was nothing before him, with my slender voice and discriminating manner. I might as well have attemped to parry a cudgel with a small sword. If he found me in any way gaining ground upon him, he would take refuge in his mighty voice, and throw his tones like peals of thunder at me, until they were drowned in the still louder thunders of applause from the audience.

To tell the truth, I suspect that I was not shown fair play, and that there was management at the bottom; for, without vanity, I think I was a better actor than he. As I had not embarked in the vagabond line through ambition, I did not repine at lack of preferment; but I was grieved to find that a vagrant life was not without its cares and anxieties, and that jealousies, intrigues, and mad ambition, were to be found even among vagabonds.

Indeed, as I became more familiar with my situation, and the delusions of fancy gradually faded away, I began to find that my associates were not the happy, careless creatures I had at first

imagined them. They were jealous of each other's talents; they quarreled about parts the same as the actors in the grand theaters; they quarreled about dresses; and there was one robe of yellow silk, trimmed with red, and a headdress of three rumpled ostrich feathers, which were continually setting the ladies of the company by the ears.[1] Even those who had attained the highest honors were not more happy than the rest; for Mr. Flimsey himself, our first tragedian, and apparently a jovial, good-humored fellow, confessed to me one day, in the fullness of his heart, that he was a miserable man. He had a brother-in-law, a relative by marriage, though not by blood, who was manager of a theater in a small country town. And this same brother ("a little more than kin, and less than kind"[2]) looked down upon him, and treated him with contumely, because, forsooth, he was but a strolling player. I tried to console him with the thoughts of the vast applause he daily received, but it was all in vain. He declared that it gave him no delight, and that he should never be a happy man until the name of Flimsey rivaled the name of Crimp.

How little do those before the scenes know of what passes behind! How little can they judge from the countenances of actors of what is passing in their hearts! I have known two lovers quarrel like cats behind the scenes, who were, the moment after, to fly into each other's embraces. And I have dreaded, when our Belvidera[3] was to take her farewell kiss of her Jaffier,[3]

[1] To "set by the ears" is to cause to quarrel.

[2] See Shakespeare's Hamlet, act i., sc. 2.

[3] Jaffier and Belvidera are two characters in Venice Preserved, a tragedy by Thomas Otway, English dramatic writer (1651–85). Jaffier, a young man befriended by Priuli, a proud Venetian senator, rescues the senator's daughter Belvidera from shipwreck, and then secretly marries her. The old man having discarded them both, Jaffier is induced by Pierre to join a conspiracy against the senators. Belvidera, to save her father, induces her husband to disclose the plot on condition of a free pardon to all the conspirators. When Jaffier learns that the pardon is to be limited to himself, he stabs his friend Pierre to prevent his torture, and then kills himself, whereupon Belvidera becomes mad and dies.

lest she should bite a piece out of his cheek. Our tragedian was a rough joker off the stage; our prime clown, the most peevish mortal living. The latter used to go about snapping and snarling, with a broad laugh painted on his countenance, and I can assure you that, whatever may be said of the gravity of a monkey, or the melancholy of a gibed cat,[1] there is no more melancholy creature in existence than a mountebank off duty.

The only thing in which all parties agreed was to backbite the manager, and cabal against his regulations. This, however, I have since discovered to be a common trait of human nature, and to take place in all communities. It would seem to be the main business of man to repine at government. In all situations of life into which I have looked, I have found mankind divided into two grand parties, — those who ride, and those who are ridden. The great struggle of life seems to be which shall keep in the saddle. This, it appears to me, is the fundamental principle of politics, whether in great or little life. However, I do not mean to moralize, but one cannot always sink the philosopher.

Well, then, to return to myself, it was determined, as I said, that I was not fit for tragedy, and, unluckily, as my study was bad, having a very poor memory, I was pronounced unfit for comedy also; besides, the line of young gentlemen was already engrossed by an actor with whom I could not pretend to enter into competition, he having filled it for almost half a century. I came down again, therefore, to pantomime. In consequence, however, of the good offices of the manager's lady, who had taken a liking to me, I was promoted from the part of the satyr to that of the lover, and with my face patched and painted, a huge cravat of paper, a steeple-crowned hat, and dangling, long-skirted, sky-blue coat, was metamorphosed into the lover of Columbine.[2] My part did not call for much of the tender and sentimental. I had merely to pursue the fugitive fair one; to have a door now

[1] "As melancholy as a gibed cat," is an old proverbial expression.

[2] See Note 1, p. 170.

and then slammed in my face; to run my head occasionally against a post; to tumble and roll about with Pantaloon[1] and the clown; and to endure the hearty thwacks of Harlequin's wooden sword.

As ill luck would have it, my poetical temperament began to ferment within me, and to work out new troubles. The inflammatory air of a great metropolis, added to the rural scenes in which the fairs were held, such as Greenwich Park,[2] Epping Forest, and the lovely valley of the West End, had a powerful effect upon me. While in Greenwich Park I was witness to the old holiday games of running down hill and kissing in the ring; and then the firmament of blooming faces and blue eyes that would be turned towards me, as I was playing antics on the stage; all these set my young blood and my poetical vein in full flow. In short, I played the character to the life, and became desperately enamored of Columbine. She was a trim, well made, tempting girl, with a roguish, dimpling face, and fine chestnut hair clustering all about it. The moment I got fairly smitten, there was an end to all playing. I was such a creature of fancy and feeling that I could not put on a pretended, when I was powerfully affected by a real, emotion. I could not sport with a fiction that came so near to the fact. I became too natural in my acting to succeed. And then, what a situation for a lover! I was a mere stripling, and she played with my passion, for girls soon grow more adroit and knowing in these matters than your awkward youngsters. What agonies had I to suffer! Every time that she danced in front of the booth, and made such liberal displays of her charms, I was in torment. To complete my misery, I had a real rival in Harlequin, an active, vigorous, knowing varlet, of six and twenty. What had a raw, inexperienced youngster like me to hope from such a competition?

I had still, however, some advantages in my favor. In spite

1 A feeble-minded old man in the pantomime, who aids and abets the clown in all his knavery.

2 A park in Greenwich on the Thames, six miles below London Bridge. It is a favorite resort, and is noted for its fine old chestnut trees.

of my change of life, I retained that indescribable something which always distinguishes the gentleman; that something which dwells in a man's air and deportment, and not in his clothes, and which is as difficult for a gentleman to put off, as for a vulgar fellow to put on. The company generally felt it, and used to call me "Little Gentleman Jack." The girl felt it, too, and, in spite of her predilection for my powerful rival, she liked to flirt with me. This only aggravated my troubles, by increasing my passion, and awakening the jealousy of her party-colored lover.

Alas! think what I suffered at being obliged to keep up an ineffectual chase after my Columbine through whole pantomimes; to see her carried off in the vigorous arms of the happy Harlequin; and to be obliged, instead of snatching her from him, to tumble sprawling with Pantaloon and the clown, and bear the infernal and degrading thwacks of my rival's weapon of lath, which, may Heaven confound him! (excuse my passion) the villain laid on with a malicious good will; nay, I could absolutely hear him chuckle and laugh beneath his accursed mask. I beg pardon for growing a little warm in my narrative; I wish to be cool, but these recollections will sometimes agitate me. I have heard and read of many desperate and deplorable situations of lovers, but none, I think, in which true love was ever exposed to so severe and peculiar a trial.

This could not last long; flesh and blood, at least such flesh and blood as mine, could not bear it. I had repeated heartburnings and quarrels with my rival, in which he treated me with the mortifying forbearance of a man towards a child. Had he quarreled outright with me, I could have stomached[1] it, at least I should have known what part to take; but to be humored and treated as a child in the presence of my mistress, when I felt all the bantam[2] spirit of a little man swelling within me — gods! it was insufferable!

[1] Endured.

[2] Resembling the bantam; hence, absurdly combative and consequential.

At length, we were exhibiting one day at West End fair, which was at that time a very fashionable resort, and often beleagured with gay equipages from town. Among the spectators that filled the first row of our little canvas theater one afternoon, when I had to figure in a pantomime, were a number of young ladies from a boarding school, with their governess. Guess my confusion, when, in the midst of my antics, I beheld among the number my quondam flame;[1] her whom I had berhymed at school, her for whose charms I had smarted so severely,—the cruel Sacharissa. What was worse, I fancied she recollected me, and was repeating the story of my humiliating flagellation, for I saw her whispering to her companions and her governess. I lost all consciousness of the part I was acting, and of the place where I was. I felt shrunk to nothing, and could have crept into a rat hole. Unluckily, none was open to receive me. Before I could recover from my confusion, I was tumbled over by Pantaloon and the clown, and I felt the sword of Harlequin making vigorous assaults in a manner most degrading to my dignity.

Heaven and earth! was I again to suffer martyrdom in this ignominious manner, in the knowledge, and even before the very eyes of this most beautiful, but most disdainful, of fair ones? All my long smothered wrath broke out at once; the dormant feelings of the gentleman arose within me. Stung to the quick by intolerable mortification, I sprang on my feet in an instant, leaped upon Harlequin like a young tiger, tore off his mask, buffeted him in the face, and soon shed more blood on the stage than had been spilt upon it during a whole tragic campaign of battles and murders.

As soon as Harlequin recovered from his surprise, he returned my assault with interest. I was nothing in his hands. I was game, to be sure, for I was a gentleman; but he had the clownish advantage of bone and muscle. I felt as if I could have fought even unto the death, and I was likely to do so, for he was, according to the boxing phrase, "putting my head into chan-

[1] "Quondam flame," i.e., former sweetheart.

cery,"[1] when the gentle Columbine flew to my assistance. God bless the women! they are always on the side of the weak and the oppressed!

The battle now became general; the *dramatis personæ* ranged on either side. The manager interposed in vain; in vain were his spangled black bonnet and towering white feathers seen whisking about, and nodding and bobbing in the thickest of the fight. Warriors, ladies, priests, satyrs, kings, queens, gods, and goddesses, all joined pellmell in the affray; never, since the conflict under the walls of Troy,[2] had there been such a chance medley warfare of combatants, human and divine. The audience applauded, the ladies shrieked, and fled from the theater; and a scene of discord ensued that baffles all description.

Nothing but the interference of the peace officers restored some degree of order. The havoc, however, among dresses and decorations, put an end to all further acting for that day. The battle over, the next thing was to inquire why it was begun, a common question among politicians after a bloody and unprofitable war, and one not always easy to be answered. It was soon traced to me, and my unaccountable transport of passion, which they could only attribute to my having *run amuck*. The manager was judge and jury, and plaintiff into the bargain, and in such cases justice is always speedily administered. He came out of the fight as sublime a wreck as the Santissima Trinidada.[3]

[1] To "get the head into chancery," is to get one's antagonist under one's arm, and hence to have him wholly in one's power; an allusion to the condition of a person involved in a chancery court, where he was helpless, while the lawyers lived upon his estate.

[2] "Conflict under the walls of Troy," i.e., the Trojan War. Paris, son of Priam, King of Troy (an ancient city in Asia Minor), eloped with Helen, wife of Menelaus, the King of Sparta in Greece, and the brother of Agamemnon. The Greeks arose in wrath, with Agamemnon at their head, and besieged Troy, which fell after a struggle which lasted ten years. The city was taken and burned to the ground. The tale of the siege of Troy, which is probably mythical, is described in Homer's Iliad, an epic poem in twenty-four books.

[3] A Spanish ship, the largest man-of-war afloat in the memorable engage-

His gallant plumes, which once towered aloft, were drooping about his ears, his robe of state hung in ribbons from his back, and but ill concealed the ravages he had suffered in the rear. He had received kicks and cuffs from all sides during the tumult, for every one took the opportunity of slyly gratifying some lurking grudge on his fat carcass. He was a discreet man, and did not choose to declare war with all his company, so he swore all those kicks and cuffs had been given by me, and I let him enjoy the opinion. Some wounds he bore, however, which were the incontestable traces of a woman's warfare. His sleek, rosy cheek was scored by trickling furrows, which were ascribed to the nails of my intrepid and devoted Columbine. The ire of the monarch was not to be appeased; he had suffered in his person, and he had suffered in his purse; his dignity, too, had been insulted, and that went for something, for dignity is always more irascible, the more petty the potentate. He wreaked his wrath upon the beginners of the affray, and Columbine and myself were discharged at once from the company.

Figure me, then, to yourself, a stripling of little more than sixteen, a gentleman by birth, a vagabond by trade, turned adrift upon the world, making the best of my way through the crowd of West End fair, my mountebank dress fluttering in rags about me, the weeping Columbine hanging upon my arm, in splendid but tattered finery, the tears coursing one by one down her face, carrying off the red paint in torrents, and literally "preying upon her damask cheek."

The crowd made way for us as we passed, and hooted in our rear. I felt the ridicule of my situation, but had too much gallantry to desert this fair one, who had sacrificed everything for me. Having wandered through the fair, we emerged, like another

ment off Cape Trafalgar, between the combined French and Spanish fleet under Villeneuve, and the English fleet under Nelson. The French and Spanish fleet was completely overpowered, and was soon reduced to a helpless, disabled mass of fragments. By this battle England's supremacy over the sea was established.

Adam and Eve, into unknown regions, and "had the world before us where to choose."[1] Never was a more disconsolate pair seen in the soft valley of West End. The luckless Columbine cast many a lingering look at the fair, which seemed to put on a more than usual splendor, its tents, and booths, and party-colored groups, all brightening in the sunshine, and gleaming among the trees, and its gay flags and streamers fluttering in the light summer airs. With a heavy sigh she would lean on my arm and proceed. I had no hope nor consolation to give her; but she had linked herself to my fortunes, and she was too much of a woman to desert me.

Pensive and silent, then, we traversed the beautiful fields which lie behind Hampstead, and wandered on until the fiddle, and the hautboy, and the shout, and the laugh, were swallowed up in the deep sound of the big bass drum; and even that died away into a distant rumble. We passed along the pleasant, sequestered walk of Nightingale Lane.[2] For a pair of lovers, what scene could be more propitious? But such a pair of lovers! Not a nightingale sang to soothe us; the very gypsies, who were encamped there during the fair, made no offer to tell the fortunes of such an ill-omened couple, whose fortunes, I suppose, they thought too legibly written to need an interpreter; and the gypsy children crawled into their cabins, and peeped out fearfully at us as we went by. For a moment I paused, and was almost tempted to turn gypsy, but the poetical feeling, for the present, was fully satisfied, and I passed on. Thus we traveled and traveled, like a prince and princess in a nursery tale, until we had traversed a part of Hampstead Heath,[3] and arrived in the vicinity of Jack Straw's Castle. Here, wearied and dispirited, we

[1] "The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest."

MILTON'S Paradise Lost, Book XII.

[2] A street which divides London Docks from St. Katherine's Docks. As late as 1629 it was still country, for in that year it is recorded that Charles I. killed a stag in Nightingale Lane.

[3] A wild, hilly heath in Hampstead, once a favorite resort of highwaymen.

seated ourselves on the margin of the hill hard by the very milestone where Whittington [1] of yore heard the Bow bells ring out the presage of his future greatness. Alas! no bell rung an invitation to us, as we looked disconsolately upon the distant city. Old London seemed to wrap itself unsociably in its mantle of brown smoke, and to offer no encouragement to such a couple of tatterdemalions.

For once, at least, the usual course of the pantomime was reversed; Harlequin was jilted, and the lover had carried off Columbine in good earnest. But what was I to do with her? I could not take her in my hand, return to my father, throw myself on my knees, and crave his forgiveness and blessing, according to dramatic usage. The very dogs would have chased such a draggle-tailed beauty from the grounds.

In the midst of my doleful dumps some one tapped me on the shoulder, and, looking up, I saw a couple of rough, sturdy fellows standing behind me. Not knowing what to expect, I jumped on my legs, and was preparing again to make battle, but was tripped up and secured in a twinkling.

"Come, come, young master," said one of the fellows in a gruff but good-humored tone, "don't let's have any of your tantrums; one would have thought you had had swing enough for this bout.[2] Come, it's high time to leave off harlequinading,[3] and go home to your father."

[1] A poor orphan country lad who procured employment in the house of a kind London merchant, but was so badly treated by the cook that he ran away. While resting on the roadside he heard the bells of Bow Church, which seemed to say to him, "Turn again, Whittington, thrice mayor of London;" so he returned. Not long after this the master allowed each of his servants to send off something in a ship bound for Morocco, to be sold there at a profit. Dick sent the only thing he had, — a cat; but the King of Morocco, being troubled with mice, was so pleased that he bought the cat at a high price. Dick commenced business with this money, rose to great wealth, was knighted, and was three times elected mayor of London, in 1398, 1406, and 1419. Recent researches have proved this story to be founded on fact.

[2] "Swing enough," etc., i.e., enough liberty for this turn.

[3] Making sport.

In fact, I had fallen into the hands of remorseless men. The cruel Sacharissa had proclaimed who I was, and that a reward had been offered throughout the country for any tidings of me, and they had seen a description of me which had been inserted in the public papers. Those harpies,[1] therefore, for the mere sake of filthy lucre,[2] were resolved to deliver me over into the hands of my father, and the clutches of my pedagogue.

In vain I swore I would not leave my faithful and afflicted Columbine. In vain I tore myself from their grasp, and flew to her, and vowed to protect her, and wiped the tears from her cheek, and with them a whole blush that might have vied with the carnation for brilliancy. My persecutors were inflexible; they even seemed to exult in our distress, and to enjoy this theatrical display of dirt, and finery, and tribulation. I was carried off in despair, leaving my Columbine destitute in the wide world; but many a look of agony did I cast back at her as she stood gazing piteously after me from the brink of Hampstead Hill, so forlorn, so fine, so ragged, so bedraggled, yet so beautiful.

Thus ended my first peep into the world. I returned home, rich in good-for-nothing experience, and dreading the reward I was to receive for my improvement. My reception, however, was quite different from what I had expected. My father had a spice of the devil in him, and did not seem to like me the worse for my freak, which he termed sowing my wild oats. He happened to have some of his sporting friends to dine the very day of my return; they made me tell some of my adventures, and laughed heartily at them.

One old fellow, with an outrageously red nose, took to me hugely. I heard him whisper to my father that I was a lad of mettle, and might make something clever, to which my father replied that I had good points, but was an ill-broken whelp, and required a great deal of the whip. Perhaps this very conversation raised me a little in his esteem, for I found the red-nosed old gentleman was a veteran fox hunter of the neighborhood,

[1] Extortioners. [2] "Filthy lucre," i.e., money.

for whose opinion my father had vast deference. Indeed, I believe he would have pardoned anything in me more readily than poetry, which he called a cursed, sneaking, puling, housekeeping employment, the bane of all fine manhood. He swore it was unworthy of a youngster of my expectations, who was one day to have so great an estate, and would be able to keep horses and hounds, and hire poets to write songs for him into the bargain.

I had now satisfied, for a time, my roving propensity. I had exhausted the poetical feeling; I had been heartily buffeted out of my love for theatrical display. I felt humiliated by my exposure, and willing to hide my head anywhere for a season, so that I might be out of the way of the ridicule of the world; for I found folks not altogether so indulgent abroad as they were at my father's table. I could not stay at home; the house was intolerably doleful now that my mother was no longer there to cherish me. Everything around spoke mournfully of her. The little flower garden in which she delighted, was all in disorder and overrun with weeds. I attempted for a day or two to arrange it, but my heart grew heavier and heavier as I labored. Every little broken-down flower, that I had seen her rear so tenderly, seemed to plead in mute eloquence to my feelings. There was a favorite honeysuckle which I had seen her often training with assiduity, and had heard her say it would be the pride of her garden. I found it groveling along the ground, tangled and wild, and twining round every worthless weed, and it struck me as an emblem of myself, a mere scatterling,[1] running to waste and uselessness. I could work no longer in the garden.

My father sent me to pay a visit to my uncle, by way of keeping the old gentleman in mind of me. I was received, as usual, without any expression of discontent, which we always considered equivalent to a hearty welcome. Whether he had ever heard of my strolling freak or not I could not discover, he and his man were both so taciturn. I spent a day or two roaming about the

[1] A vagabond, or one who has no fixed habitation.

dreary mansion and neglected park, and felt at one time, I believe, a touch of poetry, for I was tempted to drown myself in a fish pond. I rebuked the evil spirit, however, and it left me. I found the same red-headed boy running wild about the park, but I felt in no humor to hunt him at present. On the contrary, I tried to coax him to me, and to make friends with him, but the young savage was untamable.

When I returned from my uncle's, I remained at home for some time, for my father was disposed, he said, to make a man of me. He took me out hunting with him, and I became a great favorite of the red-nosed squire, because I rode at everything, never refused the boldest leap, and was always sure to be in at the death. I used often, however, to offend my father at hunting dinners by taking the wrong side in politics. My father was amazingly ignorant, — so ignorant, in fact, as not to know that he knew nothing. He was stanch, however, to church and king, and full of old-fashioned prejudices. Now I had picked up a little knowledge in politics and religion during my rambles with the strollers, and found myself capable of setting him right as to many of his antiquated notions. I felt it my duty to do so. We were apt, therefore, to differ occasionally in the political discussions which sometimes arose at those hunting dinners.

I was at that age when a man knows least, and is most vain of his knowledge, and when he is extremely tenacious in defending his opinion upon subjects about which he knows nothing. My father was a hard man for any one to argue with, for he never knew when he was refuted. I sometimes posed him[1] a little, but then he had one argument that always settled the question; he would threaten to knock me down. I believe he at last grew tired of me, because I both outtalked and outrode him. The red-nosed squire, too, got out of conceit with me, because, in the heat of the chase, I rode over him one day as he and his horse lay sprawling in the dirt. So I found myself getting into disgrace with all the world, and would have got heartily out of

[1] "Posed him," i.e., embarrassed him by questioning.

humor with myself had I not been kept in tolerable self-conceit by the parson's three daughters.

They were the same who had admired my poetry on a former occasion, when it had brought me into disgrace at school, and I had ever since retained an exalted idea of their judgment. Indeed, they were young ladies not merely of taste but of science. Their education had been superintended by their mother, who was a bluestocking. They knew enough of botany to tell the technical names of all the flowers in the garden, and all their secret concerns into the bargain. They knew music, too,—not mere commonplace music, but Rossini[1] and Mozart,[2] and they sang Moore's Irish Melodies to perfection. They had pretty little worktables, covered with all kinds of objects of taste,—specimens of lava, and painted eggs, and workboxes painted and varnished by themselves. They excelled in knotting and netting, and painted in water colors, and made feather fans, and fire screens, and worked in silks and worsteds, and talked French and Italian, and knew Shakespeare[3] by heart. They even knew something of geology and mineralogy, and went about the neighborhood knocking stones to pieces, to the great admiration and perplexity of the country folk.

I am a little too minute, perhaps, in detailing their accomplishments, but I wish to let you see that these were not commonplace young ladies, but had pretensions quite above the ordinary run. It was some consolation to me, therefore, to find favor in such eyes. Indeed, they had always marked me out for a genius, and considered my late vagrant freak as fresh proof of the fact. They observed that Shakespeare himself had been a mere pickle[4]

[1] Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868), a celebrated Italian composer, author of William Tell, Stabat Mater, and other famous operas.

[2] Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91), a celebrated German composer of symphonies, sonatas, operas, etc. His masterpiece is the opera Don Juan.

[3] William Shakespeare (1564–1616), greatest of English poets and dramatists. Some of his most popular plays are Hamlet, the Merchant of Venice, and Romeo and Juliet, though many of his other works are equally famous.

[4] "A mere pickle," i.e., a troublesome child.

in his youth; that he had stolen a deer, as every one knew, and kept loose company, and consorted with actors; so I comforted myself marvelously with the idea of having so decided a Shakespearian trait in my character.

The youngest of the three, however, was my grand consolation. She was a pale, sentimental girl, with long hyacinthine[1] ringlets hanging about her face. She wrote poetry herself, and we kept up a poetical correspondence. She had a taste for the drama, too, and I taught her how to act several of the scenes in "Romeo and Juliet." I used to rehearse the garden scene under her lattice, which looked out from among woodbine and honeysuckles into the churchyard. I began to think her amazingly pretty as well as clever, and I believe I should have finished by falling in love with her, had not her father discovered our theatrical studies. He was a studious, abstracted man, generally too much absorbed in his learned and religious labors to notice the little foibles of his daughters, and perhaps blinded by a father's fondness; but he unexpectedly put his head out of his study window one day in the midst of a scene, and put a stop to our rehearsals. He had a vast deal of that prosaic good sense which I forever found a stumbling-block in my poetical path. My rambling freak had not struck the good man as poetically as it had his daughters. He drew his comparison from a different manual. He looked upon me as a prodigal son, and doubted whether I should ever arrive at the happy catastrophe of the fatted calf.[2]

I fancy some intimation was given to my father of this new breaking out of my poetical temperament, for he suddenly intimated that it was high time I should prepare for the university. I dreaded a return to the school whence I had eloped; the ridicule of my fellow-scholars, and the glance from the squire's pew, would have been worse than death to me. I was fortunately spared the humiliation. My father sent me to board with a country clergyman, who had three or four boys under his care.

[1] Resembling the hyacinth, whose petals curl over; hence, "curling."

[2] See the parable of the prodigal son, Luke xv. 11–32.

I went to him joyfully, for I had often heard my mother mention him with esteem. In fact he had been an admirer of hers in his younger days, though too humble in fortune and modest in pretensions to aspire to her hand; but he had ever retained a tender regard for her. He was a good man, a worthy specimen of that valuable body of our country clergy who silently and unostentatiously do a vast deal of good; who are, as it were, woven into the whole system of rural life, and operate upon it with the steady yet unobtrusive influence of temperate piety and learned good sense. He lived in a small village not far from Warwick,[1] one of those little communities where the scanty flock is, in a manner, folded into the bosom of the pastor. The venerable church, in its grass-grown cemetery, was one of those rural temples scattered about our country as if to sanctify the land.

I have the worthy pastor before my mind's eye at this moment, with his mild, benevolent countenance, rendered still more venerable by his silver hairs. I have him before me, as I saw him on my arrival, seated in the embowered porch of his small parsonage, with a flower garden before it, and his pupils gathered round him like his children. I shall never forget his reception of me, for I believe he thought of my poor mother at the time, and his heart yearned towards her child. His eye glistened when he received me at the door, and he took me into his arms as the adopted child of his affections. Never had I been so fortunately placed. He was one of those excellent members of our church who help out their narrow salaries by instructing a few gentlemen's sons. I am convinced those little seminaries are among the best nurseries of talent and virtue in the land. Both heart and mind are cultivated and improved. The preceptor is the companion and the friend of his pupils. His sacred character gives him dignity in their eyes, and his solemn functions produce that elevation of mind and sobriety of conduct necessary to those who are to teach youth to think and act worthily.

I speak from my own random observation and experience, but

[1] See Note 1, p. 124.

I think I speak correctly. At any rate, I can trace much of what is good in my own heterogeneous compound to the short time I was under the instruction of that good man. He entered into the cares and occupations and amusements of his pupils, and won his way into our confidence, and studied our hearts and minds more intently than we did our books.

He soon sounded the depth of my character. I had become, as I have already hinted, a little liberal in my notions, and apt to philosophize on both politics and religion, having seen something of men and things, and learned, from my fellow philosophers, the strollers, to despise all vulgar prejudices. He did not attempt to cast down my vainglory, nor to question my right view of things; he merely instilled into my mind a little information on these topics, though in a quiet, unobtrusive way, that never ruffled a feather of my self-conceit. I was astonished to find what a change a little knowledge makes in one's mode of viewing matters, and how different a subject is when one thinks, or when one only talks about it. I conceived a vast deference for my teacher, and was ambitious of his good opinion. In my zeal to make a favorable impression, I presented him with a whole ream of my poetry. He read it attentively, smiled, and pressed my hand when he returned it to me, but said nothing. The next day he set me at mathematics.

Somehow or other the process of teaching seemed robbed by him of all its austerity. I was not conscious that he thwarted an inclination or opposed a wish, but I felt that, for the time, my inclinations were entirely changed. I became fond of study, and zealous to improve myself. I made tolerable advances in studies which I had before considered as unattainable, and I wondered at my own proficiency. I thought, too, I astonished my preceptor, for I often caught his eyes fixed upon me with a peculiar expression. I suspect, since, that he was pensively tracing in my countenance the early lineaments of my mother.

Education was not apportioned by him into tasks, and enjoined as a labor, to be abandoned with joy the moment the hour of

study was expired. We had, it is true, our allotted hours of occupation, to give us habits of method, and of the distribution of time; but they were made pleasant to us, and our feelings were enlisted in the cause. When they were over, education still went on. It pervaded all our relaxations and amusements. There was a steady march of improvement. Much of his instruction was given during pleasant rambles, or when seated on the margin of the Avon;[1] and information received in that way often makes a deeper impression than when acquired by poring over books. I have many of the pure and eloquent precepts that flowed from his lips associated in my mind with lovely scenes in nature, which makes the recollection of them indescribably delightful.

I do not pretend to say that any miracle was effected with me After all said and done, I was but a weak disciple. My poetical temperament still wrought within me and wrestled hard with wisdom, and, I fear, maintained the mastery. I found mathematics an intolerable task in fine weather. I would be prone to forget my problems, to watch the birds hopping about the windows, or the bees humming about the honeysuckles, and whenever I could steal away, I would wander about the grassy borders of the Avon, and excuse this truant propensity to myself with the idea that I was treading classic ground, over which Shakespeare had wandered. What luxurious idleness have I indulged, as I lay under the trees and watched the silver waves rippling through the arches of the broken bridge, and laving the rocky bases of old Warwick Castle![2] and how often have I thought of sweet Shakespeare, and in my boyish enthusiasm have kissed the waves which had washed his native village!

My good preceptor would often accompany me in these desultory rambles. He sought to get hold of this vagrant mood of mind and turn it to some account. He endeavored to teach me to mingle thought with mere sensation, to moralize on the scenes around, and to make the beauties of nature administer to the un-

[1] See Note 5, p. 129. [2] See Note 1, p. 124.

derstanding of the heart. He endeavored to direct my imagination to high and noble objects, and to fill it with lofty images. In a word, he did all he could to make the best of a poetical temperament, and to counteract the mischief which had been done to me by my great expectations.

Had I been earlier put under the care of the good pastor, or remained with him a longer time, I really believe he would have made something of me. He had already brought a great deal of what had been flogged into me into tolerable order, and had weeded out much of the unprofitable wisdom which had sprung up in my vagabondizing. I already began to find that with all my genius a little study would be no disadvantage to me, and, in spite of my vagrant freaks, I began to doubt my being a second Shakespeare.

Just as I was making these precious discoveries, the good parson died. It was a melancholy day throughout the neighborhood. He had his little flock of scholars,—his children, as he used to call us,—gathered round him in his dying moments, and he gave us the parting advice of a father now that he had to leave us, and we were to be separated from each other, and scattered about in the world. He took me by the hand, and talked with me earnestly and affectionately, and called to my mind my mother, and used her name to enforce his dying exhortations, for I rather think he considered me the most erring and heedless of his flock. He held my hand in his long after he had done speaking, and kept his eye fixed on me tenderly and almost piteously; his lips moved as if he were silently praying for me, and he died away still holding me by the hand.

There was not a dry eye in the church when the funeral service was read from the pulpit from which he had so often preached. When the body was committed to the earth, our little band gathered round it, and watched the coffin as it was lowered into the grave. The parishioners looked at us with sympathy, for we were mourners not merely in dress but in heart. We lingered about the grave, and clung to one another for a time, weeping and

speechless, and then parted, like a band of brothers parting from the paternal hearth, never to assemble there again.

How had the gentle spirit of that good man sweetened our natures, and linked our young hearts together by the kindest ties! I have always had a throb of pleasure at meeting with an old schoolmate, even though one of my truant associates; but whenever, in the course of my life, I have encountered one of that little flock with which I was folded on the banks of the Avon, it has been with a gush of affection and a glow of virtue that for the moment have made me a better man.

I was now sent to Oxford,[1] and was wonderfully impressed on first entering it as a student. Learning here puts on all its majesty. It is lodged in palaces; it is sanctified by the sacred ceremonies of religion; it has a pomp and circumstance which powerfully affect the imagination. Such, at least, it had in my eyes, thoughtless as I was. My previous studies with the worthy pastor had prepared me to regard it with deference and awe. He had been educated here, and always spoke of the university with filial fondness and classic veneration. When I beheld the clustering spires and pinnacles of this most august of cities rising from the plain, I hailed them in my enthusiasm as the points of a diadem which the nation had placed upon the brows of science.

For a time old Oxford was full of enjoyment for me. There was a charm about its monastic buildings, its great Gothic quadrangles, its solemn halls and shadowy cloisters. I delighted, in the evenings, to get in places surrounded by the colleges, where all modern buildings were screened from the sight, and to see the professors and students sweeping along in the dusk in their antiquated caps and gowns. I seemed for a time to be transported

[1] The capital of Oxford County, England, and the seat of one of the greatest English universities. It lies between the junction of two rivers, the Isis and the Cherwell. On High Street, running from east to west, are Magdalen College, All Soul's College, and others. On Broad Street, at right angles to High Street, is the Bodleian Library (the public library of Oxford), which contains over 256,000 volumes.

among the people and edifices of the old times. I was a frequent attendant, also, of the evening service in the new college hall, to hear the fine organ, and the choir swelling an anthem in that solemn building, where painting, music, and architecture are in such admirable unison.

A favorite haunt, too, was the beautiful walk bordered by lofty elms along the river, behind the gray walls of Magdalen College, which goes by the name of Addison's Walk, from being his favorite resort when an Oxford student. I became, also, a lounger in the Bodleian Library, and a great dipper into books, though I cannot say that I studied them; in fact, being no longer under direction or control, I was gradually relapsing into mere indulgence of the fancy. Still this would have been pleasant and harmless enough, and I might have awakened from mere literary dreaming to something better. The chances were in my favor, for the riotous times of the university were past. The days of hard drinking were at an end. The old feuds of "Town and Gown,"[1] like the civil wars of the White and Red Roses,[2] had died away, and student and citizen slept in peace and whole skins, without risk of being summoned in the night to bloody brawl. It had become the fashion to study at the university, and the odds were always in favor of my following the fashion. Unluckily, however, I fell in company with a special knot of

[1] In the beginning of the thirteenth century, the University of Oxford struggled into existence after much opposition from the town and from the papal courts. In 1209 two clerks of Oxford were hanged, and a bitter feud arose, known as the "Feud of the Town and Gown" from the gown worn by the university students. The matter was taken up by the authorities, and the town was humiliated, but there was constant strife until the middle of the fourteenth century, when the university gained the recognition it sought.

[2] The "War of the Roses" (1450–71) was a civil war in England over the right to the throne, a matter of dispute between Edward, Duke of York, and Henry VI. of Lancaster. The name was derived from the badges of the two parties, the white rose being that of the House of York, and the red rose, that of the House of Lancaster. The war resulted in the complete overthrow of the House of Lancaster.

young fellows, of lively parts and ready wit, who had lived occasionally upon town, and become initiated into the Fancy.[1] They voted study to be the toil of dull minds, by which they slowly crept up the hill, while genius arrived at it at a bound. I felt ashamed to play the owl[2] among such gay birds, so I threw by my books, and became a man of spirit.[3]

As my father made me a tolerable allowance, notwithstanding the narrowness of his income, having an eye always to my great expectations, I was enabled to appear to advantage among my companions. I cultivated all kinds of sport and exercises. I was one of the most expert oarsmen that rowed on the Isis. I boxed, fenced, angled, shot, and hunted, and my rooms in college were always decorated with whips of all kinds, spurs, fowling pieces, fishing rods, foils, and boxing gloves. A pair of leather breeches would seem to be throwing one leg out of the half-open drawers, and empty bottles lumbered the bottom of every closet.

My father came to see me at college when I was in the height of my career. He asked me how I came on with my studies, and what kind of hunting there was in the neighborhood. He examined my various sporting apparatus with a curious eye, wanted to know if any of the professors were fox hunters, and whether they were generally good shots, for he suspected their studying so much must be hurtful to the sight. We had a day's shooting together. I delighted him with my skill, and astonished him by my learned disquisitions on horseflesh, and on Manton's guns; so, upon the whole, he departed highly satisfied with my improvement at college.

I do not know how it is, but I cannot be idle long without getting in love. I had not been a very long time a man of spirit, therefore, before I became deeply enamored of a shopkeeper's daughter in High Street, who, in fact, was the admiration of many of the students. I wrote several sonnets in praise of her,

1 A name for sporting characters collectively, especially prize fighters.

2 The owl is the emblem of wisdom.

3 "Man of spirit," i.e., a gay, reckless fellow.

and spent half of my pocket money at the shop, in buying articles which I did not want, that I might have an opportunity of speaking to her. Her father, a severe-looking old gentleman, with bright silver buckles, and a crisp, curled wig, kept a strict guard on her, as the fathers generally do upon their daughters in Oxford,—and well they may. I tried to get into his good graces, and to be sociable with him, but all in vain. I said several good things in his shop, but he never laughed; he had no relish for wit and humor. He was one of those dry old gentlemen who keep youngsters at bay. He had already brought up two or three daughters, and was experienced in the ways of students. He was as knowing and wary as a gray old badger that has often been hunted. To see him on Sunday, so stiff and starched in his demeanor, so precise in his dress, with his daughter under his arm, was enough to deter all graceless youngsters from approaching.

I managed, however, in spite of his vigilance, to have several conversations with the daughter, as I cheapened articles in the shop. I made terribly long bargains, and examined the articles over and over before I purchased. In the mean time, I would convey a sonnet or an acrostic under cover of a piece of cambric, or slipped into a pair of stockings; I would whisper soft nonsense into her ear as I haggled about the price, and would squeeze her hand tenderly as I received my half-pence of change in a bit of whity-brown paper. Let this serve as a hint to all haberdashers who have pretty daughters for shopgirls and young students for customers. I do not know whether my words and looks were very eloquent, but my poetry was irresistible, for, to tell the truth, the girl had some literary taste, and was seldom without a book from the circulating library.

By the divine power of poetry, therefore, which is so potent with the lovely sex, did I subdue the heart of this fair little haberdasher. We carried on a sentimental correspondence for a time across the counter, and I supplied her with rhyme by the stocking-full. At length I prevailed on her to grant an assigna-

tion. But how was this to be effected? Her father kept her always under his eye; she never walked out alone; and the house was locked up the moment that the shop was shut. All these difficulties served but to give zest to the adventure. I proposed that the assignation should be in her own chamber, into which I would climb at night. The plan was irresistible,—a cruel father, a secret lover, and a clandestine meeting! All the little girl's studies from the circulating library seemed about to be realized.

But what had I in view in making this assignation? Indeed, I know not. I had no evil intentions, nor can I say that I had any good ones. I liked the girl, and wanted to have an opportunity of seeing more of her, and the assignation was made, as I have done many things else, heedlessly and without forethought. I asked myself a few questions of the kind, after all my arrangements were made, but the answers were very unsatisfactory. "Am I to ruin this poor thoughtless girl?" said I to myself. "No!" was the prompt and indignant answer. "Am I to run away with her? Whither, and to what purpose?" "Well, then, am I to marry her?" "Poh! a man of my expectations marry a shopkeeper's daughter!" "What, then, am I to do with her?" "Hum—why, let me get into the chamber first, and then consider," and so the self-examination ended.

Well, sir, "come what come might,"[1] I stole under cover of the darkness to the dwelling of my dulcinea.[2] All was quiet. At the concerted signal her window was gently opened. It was just above the projecting bow window of her father's shop, which assisted me in mounting. The house was low, and I was enabled to scale the fortress with tolerable ease. I clambered with a beating heart; I reached the casement; I hoisted my body half into the chamber; and was welcomed, not by the embraces of my expecting fair one, but by the grasp of the crabbed-looking old father in the crisp, curled wig.

[1] See Shakespeare's Macbeth, act i., sc. 3; "Come what come may."

[2] The object of a ridiculous passion.

I extricated myself from his clutches, and endeavored to make my retreat, but I was confounded by his cries of "thieves!" and "robbers!" I was bothered, too, by his Sunday cane, which was amazingly busy about my head as I descended, and against which my hat was but a poor protection. Never before had I an idea of the activity of an old man's arm, and the hardness of the knob of an ivory-headed cane. In my hurry and confusion I missed my footing, and fell sprawling on the pavement. I was immediately surrounded by myrmidons,[1] who, I doubt not, were on the watch for me. Indeed, I was in no situation to escape, for I had sprained my ankle in the fall, and could not stand. I was seized as a housebreaker, and to exonerate myself of a greater crime, I had to accuse myself of a less. I made known who I was, and why I came there. Alas! the varlets knew it already, and were only amusing themselves at my expense. My perfidious Muse had been playing me one of her slippery tricks. The old curmudgeon of a father had found my sonnets and acrostics hid away in holes and corners of his shop. He had no taste for poetry like his daughter, and had instituted a rigorous though silent observation. He had moused upon our letters, detected our plans, and prepared everything for my reception. Thus was I ever doomed to be led into scrapes by the Muse. Let no man henceforth carry on a secret amour[2] in poetry!

The old man's ire was in some measure appeased by the pommeling of my head and the anguish of my sprain, so he did not put me to death on the spot. He was even humane enough to furnish a shutter, on which I was carried back to college like a wounded warrior. The porter was roused to admit me. The college gate was thrown open for my entry. The affair was blazed about the next morning, and became the joke of the college from the buttery to the hall.

I had leisure to repent during several weeks' confinement by my sprain, which I passed in translating Boethius's "Consolations

[1] Officers of the law. [2] Love affair.

of Philosophy."[1] I received a most tender and ill-spelled letter from my mistress, who had been sent to a relation in Coventry.[2] She protested her innocence of my misfortune, and vowed to be true to me "till deth." I took no notice of the letter, for I was cured for the present, both of love and poetry. Women, however, are more constant in their attachments than men, whatever philosophers may say to the contrary. I am assured that she actually remained faithful to her vow for several months. But she had to deal with a cruel father, whose heart was as hard as the knob of his cane. He was not to be touched by tears or poetry, but absolutely compelled her to marry a reputable young tradesman, who made her a happy woman in spite of herself and of all the rules of romance, and, what is more, the mother of several children. They are at this very day a thriving couple, and keep a snug corner shop just opposite the figure of Peeping Tom of Coventry.[3]

I will not fatigue you by any more details of my studies at Oxford, though they were not always as severe as these, nor did I always pay as dear for my lessons. To be brief, then, I lived on in my usual miscellaneous manner, gradually getting knowledge of good and evil, until I had attained my twenty-first year. I had scarcely come of age when I heard of the sudden death of my father. The shock was severe, for though he had never

[1] Anicius Manlius Boethius (470–525), a distingished Roman philosopher and statesman, who was wrongfully condemned and imprisoned for political conspiracy. While in prison he wrote his famous Latin work, De Consolatione Philosophiæ (On the Consolations of Philosophy).

[2] A city in Warwick County, England, eighty-five miles from London.

[3] Lady Godiva, wife of Earl Leofric of Coventry, begged him to remit a certain tax which oppressed the people of Coventry. Her husband agreed to do this if she would ride naked through the city at midday. She therefore gave orders that all the people should shut up their windows and doors, and, enveloped only in her long hair, she rode through the town, and thus delivered the people from the tax. One man, Tom of Coventry, took a peep at the lady who rode by, and was immediately struck blind. He was called "Peeping Tom," and his statue was erected in Coventry to commemorate the tale.

treated me with much kindness, still he was my father, and at his death I felt alone in the world.

I returned home, and found myself the solitary master of the paternal mansion. A crowd of gloomy feelings came thronging upon me. It was a place that always sobered me and brought me to reflection; now, especially, it looked so deserted and melancholy. I entered the little breakfasting room. There were my father's whip and spurs, hanging by the fireplace; the "Stud Book,"[1] "Sporting Magazine,"[2] and "Racing Calendar,"[3] his only reading. His favorite spaniel lay on the hearth rug. The poor animal, who had never before noticed me, now came fondling about me, licked my hand, then looked round the room, whined, wagged his tail slightly, and gazed wistfully in my face. I felt the full force of the appeal. "Poor Dash," said I, "we are both alone in the world, with nobody to care for us, and will take care of one another." The dog never quitted me afterwards.

I could not go into my mother's room; my heart swelled when I passed within sight of the door. Her portrait hung in the parlor, just over the place where she used to sit. As I cast my eyes on it, I thought that it looked at me with tenderness, and I burst into tears. I was a careless dog,[4] it is true, hardened a little, perhaps, by living in public schools, and buffeting about among strangers who cared nothing for me; but the recollection of a mother's tenderness was overcoming.

I was not of an age or a temperament to be long depressed. There was a reaction in my system that always brought me up again after every pressure, and, indeed, my spirits were always most buoyant after a temporary prostration. I settled the concerns of the estate as soon as possible, realized my property, which

[1] A book containing the pedigrees of horses, especially race horses.

[2] A magazine devoted to sports.

[3] A calendar of races to be held, and other facts of interest to those who attend horse races.

[4] "A careless dog," i.e., a worthless fellow.

was not very considerable, but which appeared a vast deal to me, having a poetical eye that magnified everything; and finding myself, at the end of a few months, free of all further business or restraint, I determined to go to London and enjoy myself. Why should I not? I was young, animated, joyous, had plenty of funds for present pleasures, and my uncle's estate in the perspective.[1] "Let those mope at college, and pore over books," thought I, "who have their way to make in the world; it would be ridiculous drudgery in a youth of my expectations." Away to London, therefore, I rattled in a tandem, determined to take the town gayly. I passed through several of the villages where I had played the Jack Pudding[2] a few years before, and I visited the scenes of many of my adventures and follies merely from that feeling of melancholy pleasure which we have in stepping again in the footprints of foregone existence, even when they have passed among weeds and briers. I made a circuit in the latter part of my journey, so as to take in West End and Hampstead, the scenes of my last dramatic exploit, and of the battle royal of the booth. As I drove along the ridge of Hampstead Hill, by Jack Straw's Castle, I paused at the spot where Columbine and I had sat down so disconsolately in our ragged finery, and had looked dubiously on London. I almost expected to see her again, standing on the hill's brink, "like Niobe, all tears;"[3] mournful as Babylon in ruins.

"Poor Columbine!" said I, with a heavy sigh, "thou wert a gallant, generous girl! a true woman, faithful to the distressed, and ready to sacrifice thyself in the cause of worthless man!"

[1] Perspective is the effect of distance on the appearance of objects; hence, "in the distance," or "in the future."

[2] A gormandizing clown.

[3] See Hamlet, act. i., sc. 2. Niobe is the personification of female sorrow. According to the Grecian fable she had twelve children, and she taunted Latona for having only two, — Apollo and Diana. Latona's children, to avenge the insult, caused the death of all Niobe's children. Niobe, inconsolable, wept herself to death, and was turned into a stone from which her tears continued to flow

I tried to whistle off the recollection of her, for there was always something of self-reproach with it. I drove gayly along the road, enjoying the stare of hostlers and stable boys, as I managed my horses knowingly down the steep street of Hampstead; when, just at the skirts of the village, one of the traces of my leader came loose. I pulled up, and as the animal was restive, and my servant a bungler, I called for assistance to the robustious master of a snug alehouse, who stood at his door with a tankard in his hand. He came readily to assist me, followed by his wife, with her bosom half open, a child in her arms, and two more at her heels. I stared for a moment, as if doubting my eyes. I could not be mistaken; in the fat, beer-blown landlord of the alehouse I recognized my old rival Harlequin, and in his slattern spouse, the once trim and dimpling Columbine.

The change of my looks from youth to manhood, and the change in my circumstances, prevented them from recognizing me. They could not suspect in the dashing young buck, fashionably dressed, and driving his own equipage, the painted beau, with old peaked hat, and long, flimsy, sky-blue coat. My heart yearned with kindness towards Columbine, and I was glad to see her establishment a thriving one. As soon as the harness was adjusted, I tossed a small purse of gold into her ample bosom, and then, pretending to give my horses a hearty cut of the whip, I made the lash curl with a whistling about the sleek sides of ancient Harlequin. The horses dashed off like lightning, and I was whirled out of sight before either of the parties could get over their surprise at my liberal donations. I have always considered this as one of the greatest proofs of my poetical genius; it was distributing poetical justice in perfection.

I now entered London *en cavalier*,[1] and became a blood[2] upon town. I took fashionable lodgings in the West End, employed the first tailor, frequented the regular lounges, gambled a little, lost my money good-humoredly, and gained a number of fashionable, good-for-nothing acquaintances. I gained some reputation,

[1] In great style. [2] A gay, dissolute man.

also, for a man of science, having become an expert boxer in the course of my studies at Oxford. I was distinguished, therefore, among the gentlemen of the Fancy; became hand and glove[1] with certain boxing noblemen, and was the admiration of the Fives Court.[2] A gentleman's science, however, is apt to get him into bad scrapes; he is too prone to play the knight-errant, and to pick up quarrels which less scientifical gentlemen would quietly avoid. I undertook one day to punish the insolence of a porter. He was a Hercules[3] of a fellow, but then I was so secure in my science! I gained the victory, of course. The porter pocketed his humiliation, bound up his broken head, and went about his business as unconcernedly as though nothing had happened; while I went to bed with my victory, and did not dare to show my battered face for a fortnight; by which I discovered that a gentleman may have the worst of the battle even when victorious.

I am naturally a philosopher, and no one can moralize better after a misfortune has taken place; so I lay on my bed and moralized on this sorry ambition which levels the gentleman with the clown. I know it is the opinion of many sages, who have thought deeply on these matters, that the noble science of boxing keeps up the bulldog courage of the nation,—and far be it from me to decry the advantage of becoming a nation of bulldogs; but I now saw clearly that it was calculated to keep up the breed of English ruffians. "What is the Fives Court," said I to myself, as I turned uncomfortably in bed, "but a college of scoundrelism, where every bully ruffian in the land may gain a fellowship? What is the slang language of the Fancy but a jargon by which fools and knaves commune and understand each other, and enjoy a kind of superiority over the uninitiated?

[1] "Hand and glove," i.e., on very intimate terms.

[2] A place where boxing is practiced, so called from "fives," a slang term for the hand or fist.

[3] A hero in Grecian mythology, celebrated for his great physical strength and for the twelve great tasks, or labors, he performed. He is represented as brawny, muscular, and of huge proportions.

What is a boxing match but an arena where the noble and the illustrious are jostled into familiarity with the infamous and the vulgar? What, in fact, is the Fancy itself but a chain of easy communication, extending from the peer down to the pick-pocket, through the medium of which a man of rank may find he has shaken hands, at three removes, with the murderer on the gibbet?"

"Enough!" ejaculated I, thoroughly convinced through the force of my philosophy and the pain of my bruises; "I'll have nothing more to do with the Fancy." So when I had recovered from my victory, I turned my attention to softer themes, and became a devoted admirer of the ladies. Had I had more industry and ambition in my nature, I might have worked my way to the very height of fashion, as I saw many laborious gentlemen doing around me. But it is a toilsome, an anxious, and an unhappy life; there are few things so sleepless and miserable as your cultivators of fashionable smiles. I was quite content with that kind of society which forms the frontiers of fashion, and may be easily taken possession of. I found it a light, easy, productive soil. I had but to go about and sow visiting cards, and I reaped a whole harvest of invitations. Indeed, my figure and address were by no means against me. It was whispered, too, among the young ladies, that I was prodigiously clever, and wrote poetry; and the old ladies had ascertained that I was a young gentleman of good family, handsome fortune, and "great expectations."

I now was carried away by the hurry of gay life, so intoxicating to a young man, and which a man of poetical temperament enjoys so highly on his first tasting of it,—that rapid variety of sensations, that whirl of brilliant objects, that succession of pungent pleasures! I had no time for thought. I only felt. I never attempted to write poetry; my poetry seemed all to go off by transpiration. I lived poetry; it was all a poetical dream to me. A mere sensualist knows nothing of the delights of a splendid metropolis. He lives in a round of animal gratifications and heartless habits. But to a young man of poetical feelings, it is

an ideal world, a scene of enchantment and delusion; his imagination is in perpetual excitement, and gives a spiritual zest to every pleasure.

A season of town life, however, somewhat sobered me of my intoxication, or rather I was rendered more serious by one of my old complaints. I fell in love. It was with a very pretty, though a very haughty, fair one, who had come to London under the care of an old maiden aunt to enjoy the pleasures of a winter in town, and to get married. There was not a doubt of her commanding a choice of lovers, for she had long been the belle of a little cathedral city, and one of the poets of the place had absolutely celebrated her beauty in a copy of Latin verses. The most extravagant anticipations were formed by her friends of the sensation she would produce. It was feared by some that she might be precipitate in her choice, and take up with some inferior title. The aunt was determined nothing should gain her under a lord.

Alas! with all her charms, the young lady lacked the one thing needful,—she had no money. So she waited in vain for duke, marquis, or earl to throw himself at her feet. As the season waned, so did the lady's expectations, when, just towards the close, I made my advances.

I was most favorably received by both the young lady and her aunt. It is true I had no title, but then such great expectations! A marked preference was immediately shown me over two rivals, the younger son of a needy baronet and a captain of dragoons on half pay. I did not absolutely take the field in form, for I was determined not to be precipitate, but I drove my equipage frequently through the street in which she lived, and was always sure to see her at the window, generally with a book in her hand. I resumed my knack at rhyming, and sent her a long copy of verses,—anonymously, to be sure, but she knew my handwriting. Both aunt and niece, however, displayed the most delightful ignorance on the subject. The young lady showed them to me, wondered who they could be written by, and declared there was

nothing in this world she loved so much as poetry; while the maiden aunt would put her pinching spectacles on her nose, and read them, with blunders in sense and sound excruciating to an author's ears, protesting there was nothing equal to them in the whole Elegant Extracts.[1]

The fashionable season closed without my adventuring to make a declaration, though I certainly had encouragement. I was not perfectly sure that I had effected a lodgment in the young lady's heart, and, to tell the truth, the aunt overdid her part, and was a little too extravagant in her liking of me. I knew that maiden aunts were not to be captivated by the mere personal merits of their nieces' admirers, and I wanted to ascertain how much of all this favor I owed to driving an equipage and having great expectations.

I had received many hints how charming their native place was during the summer months, what pleasant society they had, and what beautiful drives about the neighborhood. They had not, therefore, returned home long before I made my appearance in dashing style, driving down the principal street. The very next morning I was seen at prayers, seated in the same pew with the reigning belle. Questions were whispered about the aisles after service, — "Who is he?" and "What is he?" And the replies were as usual: "A young gentleman of good family and fortune, and great expectations."

I was much struck with the peculiarities of this reverend little place. A cathedral, with its dependencies and regulations, presents a picture of other times, and of a different order of things. It is a rich relic of a more poetical age. There still linger about it the silence and solemnity of the cloister. In the present instance especially, where the cathedral was large and the town small, its influence was the more apparent. The solemn pomp of the service, performed twice a day, with the grand intonations of the organ, and the voices of the choir swelling through the

[1] Elegant Extracts in Prose, in Verse, and Epistles, a series of selections by Vicesimus Knox, D.D. (1752–1821), an English clergyman and author.

magnificent pile, diffused, as it were, a perpetual Sabbath over the place. This routine of solemn ceremony continually going on, independent, as it were, of the world; this daily offering of melody and praise, ascending like incense from the altar, had a powerful effect upon my imagination.

The aunt introduced me to her coterie, formed of families connected with the cathedral, and others of moderate fortune but high respectability, who had nestled themselves under the wings of the cathedral to enjoy good society at moderate expense. It was a highly aristocratical little circle; scrupulous in its intercourse with others, and jealously cautious about admitting anything common or unclean.

It seemed as if the courtesies of the old school had taken refuge here. There were continual interchanges of civilities, and of small presents of fruits and delicacies, and of complimentary crowquill billets; for in a quiet, well-bred community like this, living entirely at ease, little duties, and little amusements, and little civilities, filled up the day. I have seen, in the midst of a warm day, a corpulent, powdered footman issuing from the iron gateway of a stately mansion, and traversing the little place with an air of mighty import, bearing a small tart on a large silver salver.

Their evening amusements were sober and primitive. They assembled at a moderate hour, the young ladies played music, and the old ladies whist, and at an early hour they dispersed. There was no parade on these social occasions. Two or three old sedan chairs were in constant activity, though the greater part made their exit in clogs [1] and pattens,[1] with a footman or waiting maid carrying a lantern in advance; and long before midnight the clank of pattens and gleam of lanterns about the quiet little place told that the evening party had dissolved.

Still I did not feel myself altogether so much at my ease as I had anticipated, considering the smallness of the place. I found it very different from other country places, and that it was not

1 Thick soles of wood, usually supported by an iron ring, worn to raise the feet out of the mud.

so easy to make a dash there. Sinner that I was, the very dignity and decorum of the little community was rebuking to me. I feared my past idleness and folly would rise in judgment against me. I stood in awe of the dignitaries of the cathedral, whom I saw mingling familiarly in society. I became nervous on this point. The creak of a prebendary's [1] shoes, sounding from one end of a quiet street to another, was appalling to me, and the sight of a shovel hat [2] was sufficient at any time to check me in the midst of my boldest poetical soarings.

And then the good aunt could not be quiet, but would cry me up for a genius, and extol my poetry to every one. So long as she confined this to the ladies it did well enough, because they were able to feel and appreciate poetry of the new romantic school. Nothing would content the good lady, however, but she must read my verses to a prebendary who had long been the undoubted critic of the place. He was a thin, delicate old gentleman, of mild, polished manners, steeped to the lips in classic lore, and not easily put in a heat by any hot-blooded poetry of the day. He listened to my most fervid thoughts and fervid words without a glow, shook his head with a smile, and condemned them as not being according to Horace,[3] — as not being legitimate poetry.

Several old ladies, who had heretofore been my admirers, shook their heads at hearing this; they could not think of praising any poetry that was not according to Horace, and as to anything illegitimate, it was not to be countenanced in good society. Thanks to my stars, however, I had youth and novelty on my side; so the young ladies persisted in admiring my poetry in despite of Horace and illegitimacy.

I consoled myself with the good opinion of the young ladies, whom I had always found to be the best judges of poetry. "As

[1] A clergyman attached to a cathedral church.

[2] "Shovel hat," i.e., a broad-brimmed hat, turned up at the sides and projecting in front like a shovel, worn by some clergy of the English Church.

[3] Horace, or Quintus Horatius Flaccus (65–8 B.C.), a famous Latin poet.

to these old scholars," said I, "they are apt to be chilled by being steeped in the cold fountains of the classics." Still I felt that I was losing ground, and that it was necessary to bring matters to a point. Just at this time there was a public ball, attended by the best society of the place, and by the gentry of the neighborhood. I took great pains with my toilet on the occasion, and I had never looked better. I had determined that night to make my grand assault on the heart of the young lady, to battle it with all my forces, and the next morning to demand a surrender in due form.

I entered the ballroom amidst a buzz and flutter, which generally took place among the young ladies on my appearance. I was in fine spirits, for, to tell the truth, I had exhilarated myself by a cheerful glass of wine on the occasion. I talked, and rattled, and said a thousand silly things, slapdash, with all the confidence of a man sure of his auditors; and everything had its effect.

In the midst of my triumph I observed a little knot gathering together in the upper part of the room. By degrees it increased. A tittering broke out here and there, and glances were cast round at me, and then there would be fresh tittering. Some of the young ladies would hurry away to distant parts of the room, and whisper to their friends. Wherever they went, there was still this tittering and glancing at me. I did not know what to make of all this. I looked at myself from head to foot, and peeped at my back in a glass, to see if anything was odd about my person,—any awkward exposure, any whimsical tag hanging out. No, everything was right; I was a perfect picture. I determined that it must be some choice saying of mine that was bandied about in this knot of merry beauties, and I determined to enjoy one of my good things in the rebound. I stepped gently, therefore, up the room, smiling at every one as I passed, who, I must say, all smiled and tittered in return. I approached the group, smirking, and perking my chin, like a man who is full of pleasant feeling, and sure of being well received. The cluster of little belles opened as I advanced.

Heavens and earth! whom should I perceive in the midst of them but my early and tormenting flame, the everlasting Sacharissa! She was grown, it is true, into the full beauty of womanhood, but showed by the provoking merriment of her countenance that she perfectly recollected me and the ridiculous flagellations of which she had twice been the cause.

I saw at once the exterminating cloud of ridicule bursting over me. My crest fell. The flame of love went suddenly out, or was extinguished by overwhelming shame. How I got down the room I know not; I fancied every one tittering at me. Just as I reached the door, I caught a glance of my mistress and her aunt listening to the whispers of Sacharissa, the old lady raising her hands and eyes, and the face of the young one lighted up, as I imagined, with scorn ineffable. I paused to see no more, but made two steps from the top of the stairs to the bottom. The next morning, before sunrise, I beat a retreat, and did not feel the blushes cool from my tingling cheeks until I had lost sight of the old towers of the cathedral.

I now returned to town, thoughtful and crestfallen. My money was nearly spent, for I had lived freely and without calculation. The dream of love was over, and the reign of pleasure at an end. I determined to retrench while I had yet a trifle left; so, selling my equipage and horses for half their value, I quietly put the money in my pocket, and turned pedestrian. I had not a doubt that, with my great expectations, I could at any time raise funds, either on usury or by borrowing, but I was principled against both, and resolved by strict economy to make my slender purse hold out until my uncle should give up the ghost, or rather the estate. I stayed at home, therefore, and read, and would have written, but I had already suffered too much from my poetical productions, which had generally involved me in some ridiculous scrape. I gradually acquired a rusty look, and had a straitened, money-borrowing air, upon which the world began to shy me. I have never felt disposed to quarrel with the world for its conduct; it has always used me well. When I have been flush and

gay, and disposed for society, it has caressed me, and when I have been pinched and reduced, and wished to be alone, why, it has left me alone; and what more could a man desire? Take my word for it, this world is a more obliging world than people generally represent it.

Well, sir, in the midst of my retrenchment, my retirement, and my studiousness, I received news that my uncle was dangerously ill. I hastened on the wings of an heir's affections to receive his dying breath and his last testament. I found him attended by his faithful valet, old Iron John; by the woman who occasionally worked about the house; and by the foxy-headed boy, young Orson, whom I had occasionally hunted about the park. Iron John gasped a kind of asthmatical salutation as I entered the room, and received me with something almost like a smile of welcome. The woman sat blubbering at the foot of the bed, and the foxy-headed Orson, who had now grown up to be a lubberly lout, stood gazing in stupid vacancy at a distance.

My uncle lay stretched upon his back. The chamber was without fire, or any of the comforts of a sick-room. The cobwebs flaunted from the ceiling, the tester was covered with dust, and the curtains were tattered. From underneath the bed peeped out one end of his strong box. Against the wainscot were suspended rusty blunderbusses, horse pistols,[1] and a cut-and-thrust[2] sword, with which he had fortified his room to defend his life and treasure. He had employed no physician during his illness, and from the scanty relics lying on the table, seemed almost to have denied himself the assistance of a cook.

When I entered the room, he was lying motionless, his eyes fixed and his mouth open. At the first look I thought him a corpse. The noise of my entrance made him turn his head. At the sight of me a ghastly smile came over his face, and his glazing eye gleamed with satisfaction. It was the only smile he had

1 "Horse pistols," i.e., pistols of large caliber, formerly carried by dragoons and other horsemen.

2 Keen-edged.

ever given me, and it went to my heart. "Poor old man!" thought I, "why should you force me to leave you thus desolate, when I see that my presence has the power to cheer you?"

"Nephew," said he, after several efforts, and in a low, gasping voice, "I am glad you are come. I shall now die with satisfaction. Look," said he, raising his withered hand, and pointing; "look in that box on the table; you will find that I have not forgotten you."

I pressed his hand to my heart, and the tears stood in my eyes. I sat down by his bedside and watched him, but he never spoke again. My presence, however, gave him evident satisfaction, for every now and then as he looked to me, a vague smile would come over his visage, and he would feebly point to the sealed box on the table. As the day wore away, his life appeared to wear away with it. Towards sunset his head sank on the bed, and lay motionless, his eyes grew glazed, his mouth remained open, and thus he gradually died.

I could not but feel shocked at this absolute extinction of my kindred. I dropped a tear of real sorrow over this strange old man, who had thus reserved the smile of kindness to his death-bed—like an evening sun after a gloomy day, just shining out to set in darkness. Leaving the corpse in charge of the domestics, I retired for the night.

It was a rough night. The winds seemed as if singing my uncle's requiem about the mansion, and the bloodhounds howled without, as if they knew of the death of their old master. Iron John almost grudged me the tallow candle to burn in my apartment and light up its dreariness, so accustomed had he been to starveling economy. I could not sleep. The recollection of my uncle's dying scene, and the dreary sounds about the house, affected my mind. These, however, were succeeded by plans for the future, and I lay awake the greater part of the night, indulging the poetical anticipation how soon I should make these old walls ring with cheerful life, and restore the hospitality of my mother's ancestors.

My uncle's funeral was decent, but private. I knew that nobody respected his memory, and I was determined none should be summoned to sneer over his funeral, and make merry at his grave. He was buried in the church of the neighboring village, though it was not the burying place of his race; but he had expressly enjoined that he should not be buried with his family; he had quarreled with most of them when living, and he carried his resentments even into the grave.

I defrayed the expenses of his funeral out of my own purse, that I might have done with the undertakers at once, and clear the ill-omened birds from the premises. I invited the parson of the parish, and the lawyer from the village, to attend at the house the next morning, and hear the reading of the will. I treated them to an excellent breakfast, a profusion that had not been seen at the house for many a year. As soon as the breakfast things were removed, I summoned Iron John, the woman, and the boy, for I was particular in having every one present and proceeding regularly. The box was placed on the table; all was silence. I broke the seal, raised the lid, and beheld, not the will, but my accursed poem of Doubting Castle and Giant Despair!

Could any mortal have conceived that this old, withered man, so taciturn, and apparently so lost to feeling, could have treasured up for years the thoughtless pleasantry of a boy, to punish him with such cruel ingenuity? I now could account for his dying smile, the only one he had ever given me. He had been a grave man all his life; it was strange that he should die in the enjoyment of a joke, and it was hard that that joke should be at my expense.

The lawyer and the parson seemed at a loss to comprehend the matter. "Here must be some mistake," said the lawyer; "there is no will here."

"Oh!" said Iron John, creaking forth his rusty jaws, "if it is a will you are looking for, I believe I can find one."

He retired, with the same singular smile with which he had greeted me on my arrival, and which I now apprehended boded

me no good. In a little while he returned with a will perfect at all points, properly signed and sealed, and witnessed and worded with horrible correctness, in which the deceased left large legacies to Iron John and his daughter, and the residue of his fortune to the foxy-headed boy, who, to my utter astonishment, was his son by this very woman, he having married her privately, and, as I verily believe, for no other purpose than to have an heir, and so balk my father and his issue of the inheritance. There was one little proviso, in which he mentioned that, having discovered his nephew to have a pretty turn[1] for poetry, he presumed he had no occasion for wealth; he recommended him, however, to the patronage of his heir, and requested that he might have a garret, rent free, in Doubting Castle.

GRAVE REFLECTIONS OF A DISAPPOINTED MAN.

MR. BUCKTHORNE had paused at the death of his uncle, and the downfall of his great expectations, which formed, as he said, an epoch in his history, and it was not until some little time afterwards, and in a very sober mood, that he resumed his party-colored narrative.

After leaving the remains of my defunct uncle (said he), when the gate closed between me and what was once to have been mine, I felt thrust out naked into the world, and completely abandoned to fortune. What was to become of me? I had been brought up to nothing but expectations, and they had all been disappointed. I had no relations to look to for counsel or assistance. The world seemed all to have died away from me. Wave after wave of relationship had ebbed off, and I was left a mere hulk upon the strand. I am not apt to be greatly cast down,

[1] "A pretty turn," i.e., a bent or disposition.

but at this time I felt sadly disheartened. I could not realize my situation, nor form a conjecture how I was to get forward. I was now to endeavor to make money. The idea was new and strange to me. It was like being asked to discover the philosopher's stone. I had never thought about money otherwise than to put my hand into my pocket and find it, or if there were none there, to wait until a new supply came from home. I had considered life as a mere space of time to be filled up with enjoyments; but to have it portioned out into long hours and days of toil, merely that I might gain bread to give me strength to toil on,—to labor but for the purpose of perpetuating a life of labor, was new and appalling to me. This may appear a very simple matter to some; but it will be understood by every unlucky wight in my predicament, who has had the misfortune of being born to great expectations.

I passed several days in rambling about the scenes of my boyhood, partly because I absolutely did not know what to do with myself, and partly because I did not know that I should ever see them again. I clung to them as one clings to a wreck, though he knows he must eventually cast himself loose and swim for his life. I sat down on a little hill within sight of my paternal home, but I did not venture to approach it, for I felt compunction at the thoughtlessness with which I had dissipated my patrimony; yet was I to blame, when I had the rich possessions of my curmudgeon of an uncle in expectation?

The new possessor of the place was making great alterations. The house was almost rebuilt. The trees which stood about it were cut down, my mother's flower garden was thrown into a lawn,—all was undergoing a change. I turned my back upon it with a sigh, and rambled to another part of the country.

How thoughtful a little adversity makes one! As I came within sight of the schoolhouse where I had so often been flogged in the cause of wisdom, you would hardly have recognized the truant boy who, but a few years since, had eloped so heedlessly from its walls. I leaned over the paling of the playground, and

watched the scholars at their games, and looked to see if there might not be some urchin among them such as I was once, full of gay dreams about life and the world. The playground seemed smaller than when I used to sport about it. The house and park, too, of the neighboring squire, the father of the cruel Sacharissa, had shrunk in size and diminished in magnificence. The distant hills no longer appeared so far off, and, alas! no longer awakened ideas of a fairyland beyond.

As I was rambling pensively through a neighboring meadow in which I had many a time gathered primroses, I met the very pedagogue who had been the tyrant and dread of my boyhood. I had sometimes vowed to myself, when suffering under his rod, that I would have my revenge if ever I met him when I had grown to be a man. The time had come, but I had no disposition to keep my vow. The few years which had matured me into a vigorous man had shrunk him into decrepitude. He appeared to have had a paralytic stroke. I looked at him, and wondered that this poor helpless mortal could have been an object of terror to me; that I should have watched with anxiety the glance of that failing eye, or dreaded the power of that trembling hand. He tottered feebly along the path, and had some difficulty in getting over a stile. I ran and assisted him. He looked at me with surprise, but did not recognize me, and made a low bow of humility and thanks. I had no disposition to make myself known, for I felt that I had nothing to boast of. The pains he had taken, and the pains he had inflicted, had been equally useless. His repeated predictions were fully verified, and I felt that little Jack Buckthorne, the idle boy, had grown to be a very good-for-nothing man.

This is all very comfortless detail, but as I have told you of my follies, it is meet that I show you how for once I was schooled for them. The most thoughtless of mortals will some time or other have his day of gloom, when he will be compelled to reflect.

I felt on this occasion as if I had a kind of penance to perform, and I made a pilgrimage in expiation of my past levity.

Having passed a night at Leamington,[1] I set off by a private path, which leads up a hill, through a grove, and across quiet fields, till I came to the small village, or rather hamlet, of Lenington.[2] I sought the village church. It is an old, low edifice of gray stone, on the brow of a small hill, looking over fertile fields towards where the proud towers of Warwick Castle lift themselves against the distant horizon.

A part of the churchyard is shaded by large trees. Under one of them my mother lay buried. You have no doubt thought me a light, heartless being. I thought myself so; but there are moments of adversity which let us into some feelings of our nature to which we might otherwise remain perpetual strangers.

I sought my mother's grave; the weeds were already matted over it, and the tombstone was half hid among nettles. I cleared them away, and they stung my hands, but I was heedless of the pain, for my heart ached too severely. I sat down on the grave, and read over and over again the epitaph on the stone.

It was simple, but it was true. I had written it myself. I had tried to write a poetical epitaph, but in vain; my feelings refused to utter themselves in rhyme. My heart had gradually been filling during my lonely wanderings; it was now charged to the brim, and overflowed. I sank upon the grave, and buried my face in the tall grass, and wept like a child. Yes, I wept in manhood upon the grave, as I had in infancy upon the bosom, of my mother. Alas! how little do we appreciate a mother's tenderness while living! how heedless are we in youth of all her anxieties and kindness! But when she is dead and gone; when the cares and coldness of the world come withering to our hearts; when we find how hard it is to meet with true sympathy, how few love us for ourselves, how few will befriend us in our misfortunes,—then it is that we think of the mother we have lost. It is true I had always loved my mother,

[1] A town and watering place of England situated on the Leam, which runs into the Avon.

[2] A village not far from Leamington.

even in my most heedless days; but I felt how inconsiderate and ineffectual had been my love. My heart melted as I retraced the days of infancy, when I was led by a mother's hand, and rocked to sleep in a mother's arms, and was without care or sorrow. "O my mother!" exclaimed I, burying my face again in the grass of the grave; "oh, that I were once more by your side, sleeping never to wake again on the cares and troubles of this world!"

I am not naturally of a morbid temperament, and the violence of my emotion gradually exhausted itself. It was a hearty, honest, natural discharge of grief which had been slowly accumulating, and gave me wonderful relief. I rose from the grave as if I had been offering up a sacrifice, and I felt as if that sacrifice had been accepted.

I sat down again on the grass, and plucked, one by one, the weeds from her grave; the tears trickled more slowly down my cheeks, and ceased to be bitter. It was a comfort to think that she had died before sorrow and poverty came upon her child, and all his great expectations were blasted.

I leaned my cheek upon my hand, and looked upon the landscape. Its quiet beauty soothed me. The whistle of a peasant from an adjoining field came cheerily to my ear. I seemed to respire hope and comfort with the free air that whispered through the leaves, and played lightly with my hair, and dried the tears upon my cheek. A lark, rising from the field before me, and leaving as it were a stream of song behind him as he rose, lifted my fancy with him. He hovered in the air just above the place where the towers of Warwick Castle marked the horizon, and seemed as if fluttering with delight at his own melody. "Surely," thought I, "if there was such a thing as transmigration of souls, this might be taken for some poet let loose from earth, but still reveling in song, and caroling about fair fields and lordly towers."

At this moment the long-forgotten feeling of poetry rose within me. A thought sprang at once into my mind. "I will become an author!" said I. "I have hitherto indulged in poetry as a

pleasure, and it has brought me nothing but pain; let me try what it will do when I cultivate it with devotion as a pursuit."

The resolution thus suddenly aroused within me heaved a load from off my heart. I felt a confidence in it from the very place where it was formed. It seemed as though my mother's spirit whispered it to me from the grave. "I will henceforth," said I, "endeavor to be all that she fondly imagined me. I will endeavor to act as if she were witness of my actions; I will endeavor to acquit myself in such a manner that when I revisit her grave there may at least be no compunctious bitterness with my tears."

I bowed down and kissed the turf in solemn attestation of my vow. I plucked some primroses that were growing there, and laid them next my heart. I left the churchyard with my spirit once more lifted up, and set out a third time for London in the character of an author.

Here my companion made a pause, and I waited in anxious suspense, hoping to have a whole volume of literary life unfolded to me. He seemed, however, to have sunk into a fit of pensive musing; and when, after some time, I gently roused him by a question or two as to his literary career, — "No," said he, smiling, "over that part of my story I wish to leave a cloud. Let the mysteries of the craft rest sacred for me. Let those who have never ventured into the republic of letters still look upon it as a fairyland. Let them suppose the author the very being they picture him from his works. I am not the man to mar their illusion. I am not the man to hint, while one is admiring the silken web of Persia,[1] that it has been spun from the entrails of a miserable worm."

"Well," said I, "if you will tell me nothing of your literary history, let me know at least if you have had any further intelligence from Doubting Castle."

"Willingly," replied he; "though I have but little to communicate."

[1] Persia is famous for its manufactures of fine silk.

THE BOOBY SQUIRE.

ALONG time elapsed (said Buckthorne), without my receiving any accounts of my cousin and his estate. Indeed, I felt so much soreness on the subject that I wished, if possible, to shut it from my thoughts. At length chance took me to that part of the country, and I could not refrain from making some inquiries.

I learned that my cousin had grown up ignorant, self-willed, and clownish. His ignorance and clownishness had prevented his mingling with the neighboring gentry. In spite of his great fortune he had been unsuccessful in an attempt to gain the hand of the daughter of the parson, and had at length shrunk into the limits of such a society as a mere man of wealth can gather in a country neighborhood.

He kept horses and hounds, and a roaring table at which were collected the loose livers of the country round, and the shabby gentlemen of a village in the vicinity. When he could get no other company, he would smoke and drink with his own servants, who in turn fleeced and despised him. Still, with all his apparent prodigality, he had a leaven[1] of the old man in him which showed that he was his true-born son. He lived far within his income, was vulgar in his expenses, and penurious in many points wherein a gentleman would be extravagant. His house servants were obliged occasionally to work on his estate, and part of the pleasure grounds were plowed up and devoted to husbandry.

His table, though plentiful, was coarse; his liquors were strong and bad; and more ale and whiskey were expended in his establishment than generous wine. He was loud and arrogant at his own table, and exacted a rich man's homage from his vulgar and obsequious guests.

As to Iron John, his old grandfather, he had grown impatient

[1] Something that resembles leaven in its effects, as some impalpable influence, working a general change in character.

of the tight hand his own grandson kept over him, and quarreled with him soon after he came to the estate. The old man had retired to the neighboring village, where he lived on the legacy of his late master, in a small cottage, and was as seldom seen out of it as a rat out of his hole in daylight.

The cub, like Caliban,[1] seemed to have an instinctive attachment to his mother. She resided with him, but, from long habit, she acted more as a servant than as a mistress of the mansion, for she toiled in all the domestic drudgery, and was oftener in the kitchen than the parlor. Such was the information which I collected of my rival cousin, who had so unexpectedly elbowed me out of my expectations.

I now felt an irresistible hankering to pay a visit to this scene of my boyhood, and to get a peep at the odd kind of life that was passing within the mansion of my maternal ancestors. I determined to do so in disguise. My booby cousin had never seen enough of me to be very familiar with my countenance, and a few years make a great difference between youth and manhood. I understood he was a breeder of cattle, and proud of his stock; I dressed myself, therefore, as a substantial farmer, and with the assistance of a red scratch that came low down on my forehead, made a complete change in my physiognomy.

It was past three o'clock when I arrived at the gate of the park, and was admitted by an old woman who was washing in a dilapidated building which had once been a porter's lodge. I advanced up the remains of a noble avenue, many of the trees of which had been cut down and sold for timber. The grounds were in scarcely better keeping than during my uncle's lifetime. The grass was overgrown with weeds, and the trees wanted pruning and clearing of dead branches. Cattle were grazing about the lawns, and ducks and geese swimming in the fish ponds. The road to the house bore very few traces of carriage wheels, as my

[1] A character mentioned in Shakespeare's play, The Tempest. He was a savage, deformed slave of Prospero, the rightful Duke of Milan. His mother was Sycorax, a witch.

cousin received few visitors but such as came on foot or horse back, and never used a carriage himself. Once, indeed, as I was told, he had the old family carriage drawn out from among the dust and cobwebs of the coach house, and furbished up, and drove with his mother to the village church, to take formal possession of the family pew; but there was such hooting and laughing after them as they passed through the village, and such giggling and bantering about the church door, that the pageant had never made a reappearance.

As I approached the house, a legion of whelps sallied out, barking at me, accompanied by the low howling, rather than barking, of two old, worn-out bloodhounds, which I recognized for the ancient life guards of my uncle. The house had still a neglected, random appearance, though much altered for the better since my last visit. Several of the windows were broken and patched up with boards, and others had been bricked up to save taxes.[1] I observed smoke, however, rising from the chimneys, a phenomenon rarely witnessed in the ancient establishment. On passing that part of the house where the dining room was situated, I heard the sound of boisterous merriment, where three or four voices were talking at once, and oaths and laughter were horribly mingled.

The uproar of the dogs had brought a servant to the door,—a tall, hard-fisted, country clown, with a livery coat put over the under-garments of a plowman. I requested to see the master of the house, but was told that he was at dinner with some "gemmen"[2] of the neighborhood. I made known my business, and sent in to know if I might talk with the master about his cattle, for I felt a great desire to have a peep at him in his orgies.

Word was returned that he was engaged with company, and could not attend to business, but that if I would step in and take a drink of something, I was heartily welcome. I accordingly

[1] A window tax was formerly levied in England on all windows or openings, above eight in number, in houses standing in cities or towns.

[2] Gentlemen.

entered the hall, where whips and hats of all kinds and shapes were lying on an oaken table; two or three clownish servants were lounging about; everything had a look of confusion and carelessness.

The apartments through which I passed had the same air of departed gentility and sluttish housekeeping. The once rich curtains were faded and dusty, the furniture, greased and tarnished. On entering the dining room, I found a number of odd, vulgar-looking, rustic gentlemen seated round a table, on which were bottles, decanters, tankards, pipes, and tobacco. Several dogs were lying about the room, or sitting and watching their masters, and one was gnawing a bone under a side table. The master of the feast sat at the head of the board. He was greatly altered. He had grown thickset and rather gummy, with a fiery, foxy head of hair. There was a singular mixture of foolishness, arrogance, and conceit in his countenance. He was dressed in a vulgarly fine style, with leather breeches, a red waistcoat, and green coat, and was evidently, like his guests, a little flushed with drinking. The whole company stared at me with a whimsical, muzzy [1] look, like men whose senses were a little obfuscated by beer rather than wine.

My cousin — God forgive me! the appellation sticks in my throat — my cousin invited me, with awkward civility, or, as he intended it, condescension, to sit to the table and drink. We talked, as usual, about the weather, the crops, politics, and hard times. My cousin was a loud politician, and evidently accustomed to talk without contradiction at his own table. He was amazingly loyal, and talked of standing by the throne to the last guinea, "as every gentleman of fortune should do." The village exciseman, who was half asleep, could just ejaculate "very true" to everything he said. The conversation turned upon cattle; he boasted of his breed, his mode of crossing it, and of the general management of his estate. This unluckily drew out a history of the place and of the family. He spoke of my late uncle with

[1] Dazed.

the greatest irreverence, which I could easily forgive. He mentioned my name, and my blood began to boil. He described my frequent visits to my uncle when I was a lad, and I found the varlet even at that time, imp as he was, had known that he was to inherit the estate. He described the scene of my uncle's death, and the opening of the will, with a degree of coarse humor that I had not expected from him, and, vexed as I was, I could not help joining in the laugh, for I have always relished a joke, even though made at my own expense. He went on to speak of my various pursuits, my strolling freak,—and that somewhat nettled me; at length he talked of my parents. He ridiculed my father; I stomached even that, though with great difficulty. He mentioned my mother with a sneer, and in an instant he lay sprawling at my feet.

Here a tumult succeeded; the table was nearly overturned, bottles, glasses, and tankards rolled crashing and clattering about the floor. The company seized hold of both of us, to keep us from doing any further mischief. I struggled to get loose, for I was boiling with fury. My cousin defied me to strip and fight him on the lawn. I agreed, for I felt the strength of a giant in me, and I longed to pommel him soundly.

Away, then, we were borne. A ring was formed. I had a second assigned me in true boxing style. My cousin, as he advanced to fight, said something about his generosity in showing me such fair play, when I had made such an unprovoked attack upon him at his own table. "Stop there," cried I, in a rage. "Unprovoked? Know that I am John Buckthorne, and you have insulted the memory of my mother."

The lout was suddenly struck by what I said; he drew back, and thought for a moment.

"Nay, damn it!" said he, "that's too much—that's clean another thing. I've a mother myself, and no one shall speak ill of her, bad as she is."

He paused again; nature seemed to have a rough struggle in his rude bosom.

"Damn it, cousin," cried he, "I'm sorry for what I said. Thou'st served me right in knocking me down, and I like thee the better for it. Here's my hand. Come and live with me, and damn me! but the best room in the house, and the best horse in the stable, shall be at thy service."

I declare to you I was strongly moved at this instance of nature breaking her way through such a lump of flesh. I forgave the fellow in a moment his two heinous crimes, of having been born in wedlock, and inheriting my estate. I shook the hand he offered me, to convince him that I bore him no ill will, and then making my way through the gaping crowd of toad-eaters,[1] bade adieu to my uncle's domains forever. This is the last I have seen or heard of my cousin or of the domestic concerns of Doubting Castle.

THE STROLLING MANAGER.

AS I was walking one morning with Buckthorne near one of the principal theaters, he directed my attention to a group of those equivocal beings that may often be seen hovering about the stage doors of theaters. They were marvelously ill-favored in their attire, their coats buttoned up to their chins, yet they wore their hats smartly on one side, and had a certain knowing, dirty, gentlemanlike air which is common to the subalterns of the drama. Buckthorne knew them well by early experience.

"These," said he, "are the ghosts of departed kings and heroes, fellows who sway scepters and truncheons, command kingdoms and armies, and after giving away realms and treasures over night, have scarce a shilling to pay for a breakfast in the morning. Yet they have the true vagabond abhorrence of all useful and industrious employment; and they have their pleasures too, one of which is to lounge in this way in the sunshine, at the stage

[1] Flatterers.

door, during rehearsals, and make hackneyed theatrical jokes on all passers-by. Nothing is more traditional and legitimate than the stage. Old scenery, old clothes, old sentiments, old ranting, and old jokes, are handed down from generation to generation, and will probably continue to be so until time shall be no more. Every hanger-on of a theater becomes a wag by inheritance, and flourishes about at taprooms and sixpenny clubs with the property jokes of the greenroom."

While amusing ourselves with reconnoitering this group, we noticed one in particular who appeared to be the oracle. He was a weather-beaten veteran, a little bronzed by time and beer, who had no doubt grown gray in the parts of robbers, cardinals, Roman senators, and walking noblemen.

"There is something in the set of that hat and the turn of that physiognomy extremely familiar to me," said Buckthorne. He looked a little closer. "I cannot be mistaken, that must be my old brother of the truncheon, Flimsey, the tragic hero of the strolling company."

It was he in fact. The poor fellow showed evident signs that times went hard with him, he was so finely and shabbily dressed. His coat was somewhat threadbare, and of the Lord Townly cut, single-breasted, and scarcely capable of meeting in front of his body, which, from long intimacy, had acquired the symmetry and robustness of a beer barrel. He wore a pair of dingy white stockinet pantaloons, which had much ado to reach his waistcoat, a great quantity of dirty cravat, and a pair of old russet-colored tragedy boots.

When his companions had dispersed, Buckthorne drew him aside, and made himself known to him. The tragic veteran could scarcely recognize him, or believe that he was really his quondam associate, "little Gentleman Jack." Buckthorne invited him to a neighboring coffeehouse to talk over old times, and in the course of a little while we were put in possession of his history in brief.

He had continued to act the heroes in the strolling company for some time after Buckthorne had left it, or rather had been

driven from it so abruptly. At length the manager died, and the troop was thrown into confusion. Every one aspired to the crown, every one was for taking the lead, and the manager's widow, although a tragedy queen, and a brimstone[1] to boot, pronounced it utterly impossible for a woman to keep any control over such a set of tempestuous rascallions.

Upon this hint, I spoke (said Flimsey). I stepped forward, and offered my services in the most effectual way. They were accepted. In a week's time I married the widow and succeeded to the throne. "The funeral baked meats did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables,"[2] as Hamlet says. But the ghost of my predecessor never haunted me, and I inherited crowns, scepters, bowls, daggers, and all the stage trappings and trumpery, not omitting the widow, without the least molestation.

I now led a flourishing life of it, for our company was pretty strong and attractive, and as my wife and I took the heavy parts of tragedy, it was a great saving to the treasury. We carried off the palm from all the rival shows at country fairs, and I assure you we have even drawn full houses, and been applauded by the critics at Bartlemy Fair[3] itself, though we had Astley's[4] troop, the Irish giant,[5] and "the death of Nelson"[6] in waxwork to contend against.

[1] Shrew.

[2] See Shakespeare's Hamlet, act i., sc. 2. The line alludes to the second marriage of Hamlet's mother immediately after the death of her first husband. Formerly, feasts were provided for funerals as well as for marriages.

[3] Bartholomew Fair, commonly called Bartlemy Fair, was a fair or market for drapers, established in the twelfth century in Smithfield, London, and held annually from Sept. 3 to Sept. 6, until abolished in 1853.

[4] Philip Astley (1742–1814), a famous equestrian, the founder of Astley's Amphitheater in London, was the first to exhibit equestrian feats before the public.

[5] O'Brian, or Charles Byrne, the Irish giant (1761–83), was eight feet four inches tall. His skeleton is preserved in the museum of the College of Surgeons. Patrick Cotter, eight feet seven and a half inches tall, who died in 1802, also bore the nickname of the "Irish giant."

[6] Viscount Horatio Nelson (1758–1805) was one of England's most famous

I soon began to experience, however, the cares of command. I discovered that there were cabals breaking out in the company, headed by the clown, who you may recollect was a terribly peevish, fractious fellow, and always in ill humor. I had a great mind to turn him off at once, but I could not do without him, for there was not a droller scoundrel on the stage. His very shape was comic, for he had but to turn his back upon the audience, and all the ladies were ready to die with laughing. He felt his importance, and took advantage of it. He would keep the audience in a continual roar, and then come behind the scenes, and fret and fume, and play the very devil. I excused a great deal in him, however, knowing that comic actors are a little prone to this infirmity of temper.

I had another trouble of a nearer and dearer nature to struggle with, which was the affection of my wife. As ill luck would have it, she took it into her head to be very fond of me, and became intolerably jealous. I could not keep a pretty girl in the company, and hardly dared embrace an ugly one, even when my part required it. I have known her reduce a fine lady to tatters, "to very rags,"[1] as Hamlet says, in an instant, and destroy one of the very best dresses in the wardrobe, merely because she saw me kiss her at the side scenes, though I give you my honor it was done merely by way of rehearsal.

This was doubly annoying, because I have a natural liking to pretty faces, and wish to have them about me, and because they are indispensable to the success of a company at a fair, where one has to vie with so many rival theaters. But when once a jealous wife gets a freak in her head, there's no use in talking of interest or anything else. Egad, sir, I have more than once trembled when, during a fit of her tantrums, she was playing

admirals. In his engagement with the French and Spanish fleet off Cape Trafalgar (see Note 3, p. 182), a musket ball from one of the enemy's ships inflicted a mortal wound, and he died towards the close of the day of his great victory.

[1] See Shakespeare's Hamlet, act iii., sc. 2.

high tragedy, and flourishing her tin dagger on the stage, lest she should give way to her humor, and stab some fancied rival in good earnest.

I went on better, however, than could be expected, considering the weakness of my flesh, and the violence of my rib.[1] I had not a much worse time of it than old Jupiter,[2] whose spouse was continually ferreting out some new intrigue, and making the heavens almost too hot to hold him.

At length, as luck would have it, we were performing at a country fair, when I understood the theater of a neighboring town to be vacant. I had always been desirous to be enrolled in a settled company, and the height of my desire was to get on a par with a brother-in-law, who was manager of a regular theater, and who had looked down upon me. Here was an opportunity not to be neglected. I concluded an agreement with the proprietors, and in a few days opened the theater with great eclat.

Behold me now at the summit of my ambition, "the high top-gallant of my joy,"[3] as Romeo says. No longer a chieftain of a wandering tribe, but a monarch of a legitimate throne, and entitled to call even the great potentates of Covent Garden and Drury Lane cousins. You, no doubt, think my happiness complete. Alas, sir! I was one of the most uncomfortable dogs living. No one knows, who has not tried, the miseries of a manager, but above all of a country manager. No one can conceive the contentions and quarrels within doors, the oppressions and vexations from without. I was pestered with the bloods and loungers of a country town, who infested my greenroom, and played the mischief[4] among my actresses. But there was no shaking them off. It would have been ruin to affront them, for

[1] Wife.

[2] The supreme god of the Romans, whose wife was Juno. The meetings of this divine pair often resulted in quarrels and wranglings. At one time Juno attempted to chain Jupiter down, and almost succeeded.

[3] See Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, act ii., sc. 4.

[4] "Played the mischief," i.e., caused confusion.

though troublesome friends, they would have been dangerous enemies. Then there were the village critics and village amateurs, who were continually tormenting me with advice, and getting into a passion if I would not take it, especially the village doctor and the village attorney, who had both been to London occasionally, and knew what acting should be.

I had also to manage as arrant a crew of scapegraces as ever were collected together within the walls of a theater. I had been obliged to combine my original troop with some of the former troop of the theater, who were favorites of the public. Here was a mixture that produced perpetual ferment. They were all the time either fighting or frolicking with each other, and I scarcely know which mood was least troublesome. If they quarreled, everything went wrong, and if they were friends, they were continually playing off some prank upon each other, or upon me, for I had unhappily acquired among them the character of an easy, good-natured fellow, the worst character that a manager can possess.

Their waggery at times drove me almost crazy, for there is nothing so vexatious as the hackneyed tricks and hoaxes and pleasantries of a veteran band of theatrical vagabonds. I relished them well enough, it is true, while I was merely one of the company, but as a manager I found them detestable. They were incessantly bringing some disgrace upon the theater by their tavern frolics and their pranks about the country town. All my lectures about the importance of keeping up the dignity of the profession and the respectability of the company were in vain. The villains could not sympathize with the delicate feelings of a man in station. They even trifled with the seriousness of stage business. I have had the whole piece interrupted, and a crowded audience of at least twenty-five pounds kept waiting, because the actors had hid away the breeches of Rosalind,[1] and have known

[1] Rosalind, in Shakespeare's play, As You Like It, is driven from the court. For her safety while traveling, she disguises herself in man's clothing and passes as a shepherd (see act i., sc. 3).

Hamlet to stalk solemnly on to deliver his soliloquy,[1] with a dish clout pinned to his skirts. Such are the baleful consequences of a manager's getting a character for good nature.

I was intolerably annoyed, too, by the great actors who came down "starring," as it is called, from London. Of all baneful influences, keep me from that of a London star! A first-rate actress going the rounds of the country theaters is as bad as a blazing comet[2] whisking about the heavens, and shaking fire and plagues and discords from its tail.

The moment one of these "heavenly bodies" appeared in my horizon, I was sure to be in hot water.[3] My theater was overrun by provincial dandies, copper-washed counterfeits of Bond Street[4] loungers, who are always proud to be in the train of an actress from town, and anxious to be thought on exceeding good terms with her. It was really a relief to me when some random young nobleman would come in pursuit of the bait, and awe all this small fry at a distance. I have always felt myself more at ease with a nobleman than with the dandy of a country town.

And then the injuries I suffered in my personal dignity and my managerial authority from the visits of these great London actors! 'Sblood, sir, I was no longer master of myself on my throne. I was hectored and lectured in my own greenroom, and made an absolute nincompoop[5] on my own stage. There is no tyrant so absolute and capricious as a London star at a country theater. I dreaded the sight of all of them, and yet if I did not

1 Hamlet's soliloquy when he was contemplating suicide, beginning, "To be or not to be," is one of the most famous passages in Shakespeare's works (see act iii., sc. 1).

2 The appearance of comets was formerly supposed to be closely connected with the prevalence of epidemic diseases.

3 "In hot water," i.e., in difficulty.

4 Bond Street, the fashionable street of London, is so narrow that coaches are often impeded in their progress. By this defect the Bond Street loungers are afforded glimpses of the fashionables who pass and repass from two to five o'clock in the afternoon.

5 Stupid.

engage them, I was sure of having the public clamorous against me. They drew full houses, and appeared to be making my fortune, but they swallowed up all the profits by their insatiable demands. They were absolute tapeworms to my little theater; the more it took in the poorer it grew. They were sure to leave me with an exhausted public, empty benches, and a score or two of affronts to settle among the townsfolk, in consequence of misunderstandings about the taking of places.

But the worst thing I had to undergo in my managerial career was patronage. Oh, sir, of all things deliver me from the patronage of the great people of a country town! It was my ruin. You must know that this town, though small, was filled with feuds, and parties, and great folks, being a busy little trading and manufacturing town. The mischief was that their greatness was of a kind not to be settled by reference to the Court Calendar[1] or College of Heraldry;[2] it was therefore the most quarrelsome kind of greatness in existence. You smile, sir, but let me tell you there are no feuds more furious than the frontier feuds which take place in these "debatable lands" of gentility. The most violent dispute that I ever knew in high life was one which occurred at a country town, on a question of precedence between the ladies of a manufacturer of pins and a manufacturer of needles.

At the town where I was situated there were perpetual altercations of the kind. The head manufacturer's lady, for instance, was at daggers drawings with the head shopkeeper's, and both were too rich and had too many friends to be treated lightly. The doctor's and lawyer's ladies held their heads still higher, but they in turn were kept in check by the wife of a country banker, who kept her own carriage; while a masculine widow of cracked character[3] and second-handed fashion, who lived in a large house

[1] See Note 2, p. 154.

[2] A royal corporation in England, called also "College at Arms," instituted in the fifteenth century. Its chief business is the granting of armorial bearings, and the tracing and preserving of genealogies.

[3] "Of cracked character," i.e., crazy.

and claimed to be in some way related to nobility, looked down upon them all. To be sure, her manners were not over elegant, nor her fortune over large, but then, sir, her blood — oh, her blood carried it all hollow ![1] There was no withstanding a woman with such blood in her veins.

After all, her claims to high connection were questioned, and she had frequent battles for precedence at balls and assemblies with some of the sturdy dames of the neighborhood, who stood upon their wealth and their virtue; but then she had two dashing daughters, who dressed as fine as dragoons, and had as high blood as their mother, and seconded her in everything; so they carried their point with high heads, and everybody hated, abused, and stood in awe of, the Fantadlins.

Such was the state of the fashionable world in this self-important little town. Unluckily, I was not as well acquainted with its politics as I should have been. I had found myself a stranger and in great perplexities during my first season; I determined, therefore, to put myself under the patronage of some powerful name, and thus to take the field with the prejudices of the public in my favor. I cast around my thoughts for that purpose, and in an evil hour they fell upon Mrs. Fantadlin. No one seemed to me to have a more absolute sway in the world of fashion. I had always noticed that her party slammed the box door the loudest at the theater, and had the most beaux attending on them, and talked and laughed loudest during the performance, and then the Miss Fantadlins wore always more feathers and flowers than any other ladies, and used quizzing glasses[2] incessantly. The first evening of my theater's reopening, therefore, was announced in staring capitals on the playbills as under the patronage of the "Honorable Mrs. Fantadlin."

Sir, the whole community flew to arms! The banker's wife felt her dignity grievously insulted at not having the preference, her husband being high bailiff, and the richest man in the place.

[1] To "carry all hollow" is to carry beyond doubt or question.

[2] "Quizzing glasses," i. e., small eyeglasses.

She immediately issued invitations for a large party for the night of the performance, and asked many a lady to it whom she had never noticed before. Presume to patronize the theater! Insufferable! And then for me to dare to term her the "Honorable!" What claim had she to the title, forsooth? The fashionable world had long groaned under the tyranny of the Fantadlins, and were glad to make a common cause against this new instance of assumption. Those, too, who had never before been noticed by the banker's lady were ready to enlist in any quarrel for the honor of her acquaintance. All minor feuds were forgotten. The doctor's lady and the lawyer's lady met together, and the manufacturer's lady and the shopkeeper's lady kissed each other; and all, headed by the banker's lady, voted the theater a *bore*, and determined to encourage nothing but the Indian Jugglers and Mr. Walker's Eidouranion.[1]

Alas for poor Pillgarlick! I little knew the mischief that was brewing against me. My box book remained blank; the evening arrived, but no audience. The music struck up to a tolerable pit and gallery,[2] but no fashionables. I peeped anxiously from behind the curtain, but the time passed away; the play was retarded until pit and gallery became furious, and I had to raise the curtain, and play my greatest part in tragedy to "a beggarly account of empty boxes."[3]

It is true the Fantadlins came late, as was their custom, and entered like a tempest, with a flutter of feathers and red shawls; but they were evidently disconcerted at finding they had no one to admire and envy them, and were enraged at this glaring defection of their fashionable followers. All the *beau monde* were

[1] The name given to a mechanical contrivance for representing the motions of the heavenly bodies. It was invented by Adam Walker (1731–1821), an English mechanician.

[2] The two cheapest parts of a theater were the pit and the gallery. The pit, in old English theaters, was the part on the floor of the house below the level of the stage.

[3] See Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, act v., sc. 1.

engaged at the banker's lady's rout. They remained for some time in solitary and uncomfortable state, and though they had the theater almost to themselves, yet, for the first time, they talked in whispers. They left the house at the end of the first piece, and I never saw them afterwards.

Such was the rock on which I split. I never got over the patronage of the Fantadlin family. My house was deserted, my actors grew discontented because they were ill paid, my door became a hammering place for every bailiff in the country, and my wife became more and more shrewish and tormenting the more I wanted comfort.

I tried for a time the usual consolation of a harassed and henpecked man; I took to the bottle, and tried to tipple away my cares, but in vain. I don't mean to decry the bottle; it is, no doubt, an excellent remedy in many cases, but it did not answer in mine. It cracked my voice, coppered[1] my nose, but neither improved my wife nor my affairs. My establishment became a scene of confusion and peculation. I was considered a ruined man, and of course fair game for every one to pluck at, as every one plunders a sinking ship. Day after day some of the troop deserted, and, like deserting soldiers, carried off their arms and accouterments with them. In this manner my wardrobe took legs and walked away, my finery strolled all over the country, my swords and daggers glittered in every barn, until, at last, my tailor made "one fell swoop,"[2] and carried off three dress coats, half a dozen doublets, and nineteen pairs of flesh-colored pantaloons. This was the "be-all and the end-all"[3] of my fortune. I no lónger hesitated what to do. Egad, thought I, since stealing is the order of the day, I'll steal too; so I secretly gathered together the jewels of my wardrobe, packed up a hero's dress in a handkerchief, slung it on the end of a tragedy sword, and quietly

[1] Made red, or of the color of copper.

[2] "One fell swoop," i.e., one cruel seizure (see Shakespeare's Macbeth, act iv., sc. 3).

[3] See Macbeth, act i., sc. 7.

stole off at dead of night, "the bell then beating one,"[1] leaving my queen and kingdom to the mercy of my rebellious subjects, and my merciless foes, the bumbailiffs.[2]

Such, sir, was the "end of all my greatness."[3] I was heartily cured of all passion for governing, and returned once more into the ranks. I had for some time the usual run of an actor's life. I played in various country theaters, at fairs, and in barns, sometimes hard pushed, sometimes flush, until, on one occasion, I came within an ace[4] of making my fortune and becoming one of the wonders of the age.

I was playing the part of Richard III.[5] in a country barn, and in my best style, for, to tell the truth, I was a little in liquor, and the critics of the company always observed that I played with most effect when I had a glass too much. There was a thunder of applause when I came to that part where Richard cries for "a horse! a horse!" My cracked voice had always a wonderful effect here; it was like two voices run into one; you would have thought two men had been calling for a horse, or that Richard had called for two horses. And when I flung the taunt at Richmond, "Richard is *hoarse* with calling thee to arms,"[6] I thought the barn would have come down about my ears with the raptures of the audience.

The very next morning a person waited upon me at my lodgings. I saw at once he was a gentleman by his dress, for he

[1] See Shakespeare's Hamlet, act i., sc. 1.

[2] Sheriff's officers, who serve writs, make arrests, etc.

[3] See Shakespeare's Henry VIII., act iii., sc. 2. "Farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness!"

[4] "Within an ace," i.e., very near.

[5] King Richard III. of England (1452–85), the hero of Shakespeare's play of the same name. The play ends with the Battle of Bosworth Field. Richard's horse is shot from under him, and he comes upon the field crying, "A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!" (see act v., sc. 4).

[6] The quotation is "*Warwick* is hoarse with calling thee to arms," from Shakespeare's Henry VI., part ii., act. v., sc. 2. It has been transposed for the purpose of making a pun on the word "horse."

had a large brooch in his bosom, thick rings on his fingers, and used a quizzing glass. And a gentleman he proved to be, for I soon ascertained that he was a kept author, or kind of literary tailor to one of the great London theaters, — one who worked under the manager's directions, and cut up and cut down plays, and patched and pieced, and new faced, and turned them inside out; in short, he was one of the readiest and greatest writers of the day.

He was now on a foraging excursion in quest of something that might be got up for a prodigy. The theater, it seems, was in desperate condition; nothing but a miracle could save it. He had seen me act Richard the night before, and had pitched upon me for that miracle. I had a remarkable bluster in my style and swagger in my gait. I certainly differed from all other heroes of the barn, so the thought struck the agent to bring me out as a theatrical wonder; as the restorer of natural and legitimate acting; as the only one who could understand and act Shakespeare rightly.

When he opened his plan, I shrunk from it with becoming modesty, for, well as I thought of myself, I doubted my competency to such an undertaking.

I hinted at my imperfect knowledge of Shakespeare, having played his characters only after mutilated copies interlarded with a great deal of my own talk by way of helping memory or heightening the effect.

"So much the better!" cried the gentleman with rings on his fingers; "so much the better! New readings, sir! new readings! Don't study a line; let us have Shakespeare after your own fashion."

"But then my voice is cracked; it could not fill a London theater."

"So much the better! so much the better! The public is tired of intonation; the *ore rotundo*[1] has had its day. No, sir, your cracked voice is the very thing; spit and splutter, and snap

[1] Latin for "round, full voice."

and snarl, and play the very dog [1] about the stage, and you'll be the making of us."

"But then"—I could not help blushing to the end of my very nose as I said it, but I was determined to be candid—"but then," added I, "there is one awkward circumstance. I have an unlucky habit; my misfortunes, and the exposures to which one is subjected in country barns, have obliged me now and then to —to—take a drop of something comfortable—and so—and so"—

"What! you drink?" cried the agent, eagerly.

I bowed my head in blushing acknowledgment.

"So much the better! so much the better! The irregularities of genius! A sober fellow is commonplace. The public like an actor that drinks. Give me your hand, sir. You're the very man to make a dash with."

I still hung back with lingering diffidence, declaring myself unworthy of such praise.

"'Sblood, man," cried he, "no praise at all. You don't imagine *I* think you a wonder; I only want the public to think so. Nothing is so easy as to gull the public, if you only set up a prodigy. Common talent anybody can measure by common rule; but a prodigy sets all rule and measurement at defiance."

These words opened my eyes in an instant. We now came to a proper understanding, less flattering, it is true, to my vanity, but much more satisfactory to my judgment.

It was agreed that I should make my appearance before a London audience, as a dramatic sun just bursting from behind the clouds,—one that was to banish all the lesser lights and false fires of the stage. Every precaution was to be taken to possess the public mind at every avenue. The pit was to be packed with sturdy clappers; the newspapers secured by vehement puffers; [2] every theatrical resort to be haunted by hireling talkers. In a word, every engine of theatrical humbug was to be put in

[1] "Play the very dog," i.e., act like a dog.

[2] Persons secured by pay to give extravagant praise.

action. Wherever I differed from former actors, it was to be maintained that I was right and they were wrong. If I ranted, it was to be pure passion; if I were vulgar, it was to be pronounced a familiar touch of nature; if I made any queer blunder, it was to be a new reading. If my voice cracked, or I got out in my part, I was only to bounce, and grin, and snarl at the audience, and make any horrible grimace that came into my head, and my admirers were to call it "a great point," and to fall back and shout and yell with rapture.

"In short," said the gentleman with the quizzing glass, "strike out boldly and bravely, no matter how or what you do, so that it be but odd and strange. If you do but escape pelting the first night, your fortune and the fortune of the theater are made."

I set off for London, therefore, in company with the kept author, full of new plans and new hopes. I was to be the restorer of Shakespeare, and nature, and the legitimate drama; my very swagger was to be heroic, and my cracked voice the standard of elocution. Alas, sir, my usual luck attended me. Before I arrived at the metropolis a rival wonder had appeared,—a woman who could dance the slack rope, and run up a cord from the stage to the gallery, with fireworks all round her. She was seized on by the manager with avidity. She was the saving of the great national theater for the season. Nothing was talked of but Madame Saqui's fireworks and flesh-colored pantaloons; and nature, Shakespeare, the legitimate drama, and poor Pillgarlick, were completely left in the lurch.

When Madame Saqui's performance grew stale other wonders succeeded: horses, and harlequinades, and mummery of all kinds, until another dramatic prodigy was brought forward to play the very game for which I had been intended. I called upon the kept author for an explanation, but he was deeply engaged in writing a melodrama or a pantomime, and was extremely testy on being interrupted in his studies. However, as the theater was in some measure pledged to provide for me, the manager acted, according to the usual phrase, "like a man of honor," and I re-

ceived an appointment in the corps. It had been a turn of a die whether I should be Alexander the Great[1] or Alexander the coppersmith;[2] the latter carried it. I could not be put at the head of the drama, so I was put at the tail of it. In other words, I was enrolled among the number of what are called "useful men," those who enact soldiers, senators, and Banquo's shadowy line.[3] I was perfectly satisfied with my lot, for I have always been a bit of a philosopher. If my situation was not splendid, it at least was secure, and in fact I have seen half a dozen prodigies appear, dazzle, burst like bubbles, and pass away, and yet here I am, snug, unenvied, and unmolested, at the foot of the profession.

You may smile; but let me tell you, we "useful men" are the only comfortable actors on the stage. We are safe from hisses, and below the hope of applause. We fear not the success of rivals, nor dread the critic's pen. So long as we get the words of our parts—and they are not often many—it is all we care for. We have our own merriment, our own friends, and our own admirers, for every actor has his friends and admirers, from the highest to the lowest. The first-rate actor dines with the noble amateur, and entertains a fashionable table with scraps and songs and theatrical slipslop. The second-rate actors have their second-rate friends and admirers, with whom they likewise spout tragedy and talk slipslop; and so down even to us, who have our friends and admirers among spruce clerks and aspiring apprentices, who treat us to a dinner now and then, and enjoy at tenth hand the same scraps and songs and slipslop that have been served up by our more fortunate brethren at the tables of the great.

I now, for the first time in my theatrical life, experience what true pleasure is. I have known enough of notoriety to pity the

[1] Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.), King of Macedon, one of the most wonderful and famous generals of ancient times.

[2] See 2 Tim. iv. 14.

[3] "Banquo's shadowy line," i.e., ghosts. Banquo, a character in Shakespeare's Macbeth, is secretly murdered by Macbeth, who is thereafter haunted by Banquo's ghost.

poor devils who are called "favorites of the public." I would rather be a kitten in the arms of a spoiled child, to be one moment patted and pampered and the next moment thumped over the head with the spoon. I smile to see our leading actors fretting themselves with envy and jealousy about a trumpery renown, questionable in its quality, and uncertain in its duration. I laugh, too, though of course in my sleeve, at the bustle and importance, and trouble and perplexities, of our manager, who is harassing himself to death in the hopeless effort to please everybody.

I have found among my fellow-subalterns two or three quondam managers, who like myself have wielded the scepters of country theaters, and we have many a sly joke together at the expense of the manager and the public. Sometimes, too, we meet, like deposed and exiled kings, talk over the events of our respective reigns, moralize over a tankard of ale, and laugh at the humbug of the great and little world, which, I take it, is the essence of practical philosophy.

Thus end the anecdotes of Buckthorne and his friends. It grieves me much that I could not procure from him further particulars of his history, and especially of that part of it which passed in town. He had evidently seen much of literary life, and, as he had never risen to eminence in letters, and yet was free from the gall of disappointment, I had hoped to gain some candid intelligence concerning his contemporaries. The testimony of such an honest chronicler would have been particularly valuable at the present time, when, owing to the extreme fecundity of the press, and the thousand anecdotes, criticisms, and biographical sketches that are daily poured forth concerning public characters, it is extremely difficult to get at any truth concerning them.

He was always, however, excessively reserved and fastidious on this point, at which I very much wondered, authors in general appearing to think each other fair game, and being ready to serve each other up for the amusement of the public.

A few mornings after hearing the history of the ex-manager, I was surprised by a visit from Buckthorne before I was out of bed. He was dressed for traveling. "Give me joy! give me joy!" said he, rubbing his hands with the utmost glee; "my great expectations are realized!"

I gazed at him with a look of wonder and inquiry.

"My booby cousin is dead!" cried he; "may he rest in peace! He nearly broke his neck in a fall from his horse in a fox chase. By good luck, he lived long enough to make his will. He has made me his heir, partly out of an odd feeling of retributive justice, and partly because, as he says, none of his own family or friends know how to enjoy such an estate. I'm off to the country to take possession. I've done with authorship. That for the critics!" said he, snapping his finger. "Come down to Doubting Castle, when I get settled, and, egad, I'll give you a rouse."[1] So saying, he shook me heartily by the hand, and bounded off in high spirits.

A long time elapsed before I heard from him again. Indeed, it was but lately that I received a letter, written in the happiest of moods. He was getting the estate in fine order; everything went to his wishes; and, what was more, he was married to Sacharissa, who it seems had always entertained an ardent, though secret, attachment for him, which he fortunately discovered just after coming to his estate.

"I find," said he, "you are a little given to the sin of authorship, which I renounce; if the anecdotes I have given you of my story are of any interest, you may make use of them; but come down to Doubting Castle, and see how we live, and I'll give you my whole London life over a social glass, and a rattling history it shall be about authors and reviewers."

If ever I visit Doubting Castle and get the history he promises, the public shall be sure to hear of it.

[1] Good time.

PART III.

THE ITALIAN BANDITTI.

THE INN AT TERRACINA.

CRACK ! crack ! crack ! crack ! crack !

"Here comes the estafette[1] from Naples," said mine host of the inn at Terracina ;[2] "bring out the relay."

The estafette came galloping up the road according to custom, brandishing over his head a short-handled whip, with a long, knotted lash, every smack of which made a report like a pistol. He was a tight, square-set young fellow, in the usual uniform, — a smart blue coat ornamented with facings and gold lace, but so short behind as to reach scarcely below his waistband, and cocked up not unlike the tail of a wren ; a cocked hat edged with gold lace ; a pair of stiff riding boots ; but, instead of the usual leathern breeches, he had a fragment of a pair of drawers that scarcely furnished an apology for modesty to hide behind.

The estafette galloped up to the door, and jumped from his horse.

"A glass of rosolio,[3] a fresh horse, and a pair of breeches ;" said he, "and quickly, *per l'amor di Dio !*[4] I am behind my time, and must be off !"

"San Gennaro !"[5] replied the host ; "why, where hast thou left thy garment ?"

"Among the robbers between this and Fondi."[6]

[1] A courier who conveys messages to another courier.

[2] A seaport town of Italy, on the Gulf of Terracina in the Mediterranean, fifty-eight miles southeast of Rome.

[3] A red wine. [4] For the love of God.

[5] San Gennaro, or Saint Jannarius (272–305), was the patron saint of Naples. He was beheaded in 305.

[6] A town near the western coast of Italy, at the southern extremity of the Pontine Marshes (see Note 1, p. 248).

"What, rob an estafette! I never heard of such folly. What could they hope to get from thee?"

"My leather breeches!" replied the estafette. "They were bran new, and shone like gold, and hit the fancy of the captain."

"Well, these fellows grow worse and worse. To meddle with an estafette, and that merely for the sake of a pair of leather breeches!"

The robbing of the government messenger seemed to strike the host with more astonishment than any other enormity that had taken place on the road; and, indeed, it was the first time so wanton an outrage had been committed, the robbers generally taking care not to meddle with anything belonging to government.

The estafette was by this time equipped, for he had not lost an instant in making his preparations while talking. The relay was ready, the rosolio tossed off; he grasped the reins and the stirrup.

"Were there many robbers in the band?" said a handsome, dark young man, stepping forward from the door of the inn.

"As formidable a band as ever I saw," said the estafette, springing into the saddle.

"Are they cruel to travelers?" said a beautiful young Venetian lady, who had been hanging on the gentleman's arm.

"Cruel, signora!" echoed the estafette, giving a glance at the lady as he put spurs to his horse. "Corpo di Bacco![1] They stiletto all the men, and, as to the women"— Crack! crack! crack! crack! crack! The last words were drowned in the smacking of the whip, and away galloped the estafette along the road to the Pontine Marshes.[2]

"Holy Virgin!" ejaculated the fair Venetian, "what will become of us!"

[1] Body of Bacchus. Bacchus was the god of wine among the Greeks and Romans.

[2] A marshy tract of Italy, extending along the Mediterranean Sea from Cisterna on the north to Terracina on the south.

The inn of which we are speaking stands just outside of the walls of Terracina, under a vast, precipitous height of rocks, crowned with the ruins of the castle of Theodoric the Goth.[1] The situation of Terracina is remarkable. It is a little, ancient, lazy Italian town, on the frontiers of the Roman territory. There seems to be an idle pause in everything about the place. The Mediterranean spreads before it,—that sea without flux or reflux. The port is without a sail, excepting that once in a while a solitary felucca[2] may be seen disgorging its holy cargo of baccala, or codfish, the meager provision for the quaresima, or Lent. The inhabitants are apparently a listless, heedless race, as people of soft, sunny climates are apt to be, but under this passive, indolent exterior are said to lurk dangerous qualities. They are supposed by many to be little better than the banditti of the neighboring mountains, and indeed to hold a secret correspondence with them. The solitary watchtowers erected here and there along the coast speak of pirates and corsairs that hover about these shores, while the low huts, as stations for soldiers, which dot the distant road, as it winds up through an olive grove, intimate that in the ascent there is danger for the traveler, and facility for the bandit. Indeed, it is between this town and Fondi that the road to Naples is most infested by banditti. It has several windings and solitary places, where the robbers are enabled to see the traveler from a distance, from the brows of hills or impending precipices, and to lie in wait for him at lonely and difficult passes.

The Italian robbers are a desperate class of men, that have almost formed themselves into an order of society. They wear a kind of uniform, or rather costume, which openly designates their profession. This is probably done to diminish its skulking, lawless character, and to give it something of a military air in

[1] Theodoric (454–526), King of the Ostrogoths (see Note 2, p. 262), conquered Italy, and reigned over it for thirty-three years, a period of unexampled peace and happiness for the Italians.

[2] A small vessel once common on the Mediterranean, propelled by oars and sails.

the eyes of the common people, or, perhaps, to catch by outward show and finery the fancies of the young men of the villages, and thus to gain recruits. Their dresses are often very rich and picturesque. They wear jackets and breeches of bright colors, sometimes gayly embroidered; their breasts are covered with medals and relics; their hats are broad-brimmed, with conical crowns, decorated with feathers, of variously colored ribands;[1] their hair is sometimes gathered in silk nets; they wear a kind of sandal of cloth or leather, bound round the legs with thongs, and extremely flexible, to enable them to scramble with ease and celerity among the mountain precipices; a broad belt of cloth, or a sash of silk net, is stuck full of pistols and stilettos; a carbine is slung at the back; while about them is generally thrown, in a negligent manner, a great dingy mantle, which serves as a protection in storms, or a bed in their bivouacs among the mountains.

They range over a great extent of wild country, along the chain of Apennines, bordering on different states; they know all the difficult passes, the short cuts for retreat, and the impracticable forests of the mountain summits, where no force dare follow them. They are secure of the good will of the inhabitants of those regions, a poor and semibarbarous race, whom they never disturb and often enrich. Indeed, they are considered as a sort of illegitimate heroes among the mountain villages, and in certain frontier towns where they dispose of their plunder. Thus countenanced, and sheltered and secure in the fastnesses of their mountains, the robbers have set the weak police of the Italian states at defiance. It is in vain that their names and descriptions are posted on the doors of country churches, and rewards offered for them alive or dead; the villagers are either too much awed by the terrible instances of vengeance inflicted by the brigands, or have too good an understanding with them to be their betrayers. It is true they are now and then hunted and shot down like beasts of prey by the gendarmes,[2] their heads put in iron cages, and stuck upon posts by the roadside, or their limbs

[1] Ribbons. [2] Armed police.

hung up to blacken in the trees near the places where they have committed their atrocities; but these ghastly spectacles only serve to make some dreary pass of the road still more dreary, and to dismay the traveler, without deterring the bandit.

At the time that the estafette made his sudden appearance almost *en cuerpo*,[1] as has been mentioned, the audacity of the robbers had risen to an unparalleled height. They had laid villas under contribution; they had sent messages into country towns, to tradesmen and rich burghers, demanding supplies of money, of clothing, or even of luxuries, with menaces of vengeance in case of refusal. They had their spies and emissaries in every town, village, and inn along the principal roads, to give them notice of the movements and quality of travelers. They had plundered carriages, carried people of rank and fortune into the mountains, and obliged them to write for heavy ransoms, and had committed outrages on females who had fallen into their hands.

Such was, briefly, the state of the robbers, or rather such was the account of the rumors prevalent concerning them, when the scene took place at the inn of Terracina. The dark, handsome young man and the Venetian lady, incidentally mentioned, had arrived early that afternoon in a private carriage drawn by mules, and attended by a single servant. They had been recently married, were spending the honeymoon in traveling through these delicious countries, and were on their way to visit a rich aunt of the bride at Naples.

The lady was young, and tender, and timid. The stories she had heard along the road had filled her with apprehension, not more for herself than for her husband, for though she had been married almost a month, she still loved him almost to idolatry. When she reached Terracina, the rumors of the road had increased to an alarming magnitude, and the sight of two robbers' skulls, grinning in iron cages, on each side of the old gateway of the town, brought her to a pause. Her husband had tried in

[1] "*En cuerpo de camisa*," Spanish for "half-dressed."

vain to reassure her; they had lingered all the afternoon at the inn, until it was too late to think of starting that evening, and the parting words of the estafette completed her affright.

"Let us return to Rome," said she, putting her arm within her husband's, and drawing towards him as if for protection. "Let us return to Rome, and give up this visit to Naples."

"And give up the visit to your aunt, too?" said the husband.

"Nay, what is my aunt in comparison with your safety?" said she, looking up tenderly in his face.

There was something in her tone and manner that showed she really was thinking more of her husband's safety at the moment than of her own; and being so recently married, and a match of pure affection, too, it is very possible that she was; at least her husband thought so. Indeed, any one who has heard the sweet, musical tone of a Venetian voice, and the melting tenderness of a Venetian phrase, and felt the soft witchery of a Venetian eye, would not wonder at the husband's believing whatever they professed. He clasped the white hand that had been laid within his, put his arm around her slender waist, and drawing her fondly to his bosom, "This night at least," said he, "we will pass at Terracina."

Crack! crack! crack! crack! crack! Another apparition of the road attracted the attention of mine host and his guests. From the direction of the Pontine Marshes a carriage, drawn by half a dozen horses, came driving at a furious rate, the postilions smacking their whips like mad, as is the case when conscious of the greatness, or of the munificence, of their fare. It was a landaulet with a servant mounted on the dickey. The compact, highly finished, yet proudly simple, construction of the carriage; the quantity of neat, well-arranged trunks and conveniences; the loads of box coats on the dickey; the fresh, burly, bluff-looking face of the master at the window; and the ruddy, roundheaded servant, in close-cropped hair, short coat, drab breeches, and long gaiters, all proclaimed at once that this was the equipage of an Englishman.

"Horses to Fondi," said the Englishman, as the landlord came bowing to the carriage door.

"Would not his Excellenza[1] alight, and take some refreshments?"

No, he did not mean to eat until he got to Fondi.

"But the horses will be some time in getting ready."

"Ah! that's always the way; nothing but delay in this cursed country!"

"If his Excellenza would only walk into the house"—

"No, no, no! I tell you no! I want nothing but horses, and as quick as possible. John, see that the horses are got ready, and don't let us be kept here an hour or two. Tell him if we're delayed over the time, I'll lodge a complaint with the postmaster."

John touched his hat, and set off to obey his master's orders with the taciturn obedience of an English servant.

In the mean time the Englishman got out of the carriage, and walked up and down before the inn, with his hands in his pockets, taking no notice of the crowd of idlers who were gazing at him and his equipage. He was tall, stout, and well made, dressed with neatness and precision, wore a traveling cap of the color of gingerbread, and had rather an unhappy expression about the corners of his mouth, partly from not having yet made his dinner, and partly from not having been able to get on at a greater rate than seven miles an hour. Not that he had any other cause for haste than an Englishman's usual hurry to get to the end of a journey, or, to use the regular phrase, "to get on." Perhaps, too, he was a little sore from having been fleeced at every stage.

After some time the servant returned from the stable with a look of some perplexity.

"Are the horses ready, John?"

"No, sir; I never saw such a place. There's no getting anything done. I think your honor had better step into the house and get something to eat; it will be a long while before we get to Fundy."

[1] His Excellency, a title of honor or respect.

"D—n the house! it's a mere trick. I'll not eat anything, just to spite them," said the Englishman, still more crusty at the prospect of being so long without his dinner.

"They say your honor's very wrong," said John, "to set off at this late hour. The road's full of highwaymen."

"Mere tales to get custom."

"The estafette which passed us was stopped by a whole gang," said John, increasing his emphasis with each additional piece of information.

"I don't believe a word of it."

"They robbed him of his breeches," said John, giving at the same time a hitch to his own waistband.

"All humbug!"

Here the dark, handsome young man stepped forward, and addressing the Englishman very politely, in broken English, invited him to partake of a repast he was about to make.

"Thank'ee," said the Englishman, thrusting his hands deeper into his pockets, and casting a sly side glance of suspicion at the young man, as if he thought, from his civility, he must have a design upon his purse.

"We shall be most happy if you will do us the favor," said the lady, in her soft Venetian dialect. There was a sweetness in her accents that was most persuasive. The Englishman cast a look upon her countenance; her beauty was still more eloquent. His features instantly relaxed. He made a polite bow. "With great pleasure, signora,"[1] said he.

In short, the eagerness to "get on" was suddenly slackened, the determination to famish himself as far as Fondi, by way of punishing the landlord, was abandoned; John chose an apartment in the inn for his master's reception, and preparations were made to remain there until morning.

The carriage was unpacked of such of its contents as were indispensable for the night. There was the usual parade of trunks, and writing desks, and portfolios, and dressing boxes, and those

[1] Madam.

other oppressive conveniences which burden a comfortable man. The observant loiterers about the inn door, wrapped up in great dirt-colored cloaks, with only a hawk's eye uncovered, made many remarks to each other on this quantity of luggage, that seemed enough for an army. The domestics of the inn talked with wonder of the splendid dressing case, with its gold and silver furniture, that was spread out on the toilet table, and the bag of gold that chinked as it was taken out of the trunk. The strange *Milor's*[1] wealth, and the treasures he carried about him, were the talk, that evening, over all Terracina.

The Englishman took some time to make his ablutions and arrange his dress for table, and, after considerable labor and effort in putting himself at his ease, made his appearance, with stiff white cravat, his clothes free from the least speck of dust, and adjusted with precision. He made a civil bow on entering, in the unprofessing English way, which the fair Venetian, accustomed to the complimentary salutations of the Continent, considered extremely cold.

The supper, as it was termed by the Italian, or dinner, as the Englishman called it, was now served. Heaven and earth, and the waters under the earth, had been moved to furnish it, for there were birds of the air, and beasts of the field, and fish of the sea. The Englishman's servant, too, had turned the kitchen topsy-turvy in his zeal to cook his master a beefsteak, and made his appearance, loaded with catchup, and soy, and Cayenne pepper, and Harvey sauce, and a bottle of port wine from that warehouse, the carriage, in which his master seemed desirous of carrying England about the world with him. Indeed, the repast was one of those Italian farragoes which require a little qualifying. The tureen of soup was a black sea, with livers, and limbs, and fragments of all kinds of birds and beasts floating like wrecks about it. A meager-winged animal, which my host called a delicate chicken, had evidently died of a consumption. The maca-

1 For "milord," a Continental rendering of the English "my lord," a title bestowed on any person of dignity.

roni was smoked. The beefsteak was tough buffalo's flesh. There was what appeared to be a dish of stewed eels, of which the Englishman ate with great relish, but had nearly refunded them when told that they were vipers, caught among the rocks of Terracina, and esteemed a great delicacy.

Nothing, however, conquers a traveler's spleen sooner than eating, whatever may be the cookery; and nothing brings him into good humor with his company sooner than eating together. The Englishman, therefore, had not half finished his repast and his bottle before he began to think the Venetian a very tolerable fellow for a foreigner, and his wife almost handsome enough to be an Englishwoman.

In the course of the repast, the usual topics of travelers were discussed, and among others, the reports of robbers, which harassed the mind of the fair Venetian. The landlord and waiter dipped into the conversation with that familiarity permitted on the Continent, and served up so many bloody tales as they served up the dishes that they almost frightened away the poor lady's appetite. The Englishman, who had a national antipathy to everything technically called "humbug," listened to them all with a certain screw of the mouth, expressive of incredulity. There was the well-known story of the school of Terracina captured by the robbers, and one of the scholars cruelly massacred, in order to bring the parents to terms for the ransom of the rest; and another, of a gentleman of Rome, who received his son's ear in a letter, with information that his son would be remitted to him in this way, by installments, until he paid the required ransom.

The fair Venetian shuddered as she heard these tales, and the landlord, like a true narrator of the terrible, doubled the dose when he saw how it operated. He was just proceeding to relate the misfortunes of a great English lord and his family, when the Englishman, tired of his volubility, interrupted him, and pronounced these accounts to be mere travelers' tales, or the exaggerations of ignorant peasants and designing innkeepers. The landlord was indignant at the doubt leveled at his stories and

the innuendo leveled at his cloth ; [1] he cited, in corroboration, half a dozen tales still more terrible.

"I don't believe a word of them," said the Englishman.

"But the robbers have been tried and executed!"

"All a farce!"

"But their heads are stuck up along the road!"

"Old skulls accumulated during a century."

The landlord muttered to himself as he went out at the door, "*San Gennaro! quanto sono singolari questi Inglesi!*" [2]

A fresh hubbub outside of the inn announced the arrival of more travelers, and, from the variety of voices, or rather of clamors, the clattering of hoofs, the rattling of wheels, and the general uproar both within and without, the arrival seemed to be numerous.

It was, in fact, the procaccio and its convoy; a kind of caravan which sets out on certain days for the transportation of merchandise, with an escort of soldiery to protect it from the robbers. Travelers avail themselves of its protection, and a long file of carriages generally accompanies it.

A considerable time elapsed before either landlord or waiter returned, being hurried hither and thither by that tempest of noise and bustle which takes place in an Italian inn on the arrival of any considerable accession of custom. When mine host reappeared, there was a smile of triumph on his countenance.

"Perhaps," said he, as he cleared the table, "perhaps the signor has not heard of what has happened?"

"What?" said the Englishman, dryly.

"Why, the procaccio has brought accounts of fresh exploits of the robbers."

"Pish!"

"There's more news of the English milor and his family," said the host, exultingly.

"An English lord? What English lord?"

"Milor Popkin."

[1] Profession. [2] San Gennaro! how strange these Englishmen are.

"Lord Popkins? I never heard of such a title!"

"O, sicuro;[1] a great nobleman, who passed through here lately with miladi and her daughters. A magnifico,[2]—one of the grand counselors of London,—an almanno!"

"Almanno—almanno?—tut, he means alderman."

"Sicuro! Aldermanno Popkin, and the Principessa[3] Popkin, and the Signorine[4] Popkin!" said mine host, triumphantly.

He now put himself into an attitude, and would have launched into a full detail had he not been thwarted by the Englishman, who seemed determined neither to credit nor indulge him in his stories, but dryly motioned for him to clear away the table.

An Italian tongue, however, is not easily checked; that of mine host continued to wag with increasing volubility, as he conveyed the relics of the repast out of the room, and the last that could be distinguished of his voice, as it died away along the corridor, was the iteration of the favorite word, "Popkin—Popkin—Popkin—pop—pop—pop."

The arrival of the procaccio had, indeed, filled the house with stories, as it had with guests. The Englishman and his companions walked after supper up and down the large hall, or common room of the inn, which ran through the center of the building. It was spacious and somewhat dirty, with tables placed in various parts, at which groups of travelers were seated, while others strolled about, waiting, in famished impatience, for their evening's meal.

It was a heterogeneous assemblage of people of all ranks and countries, who had arrived in all kinds of vehicles. Though distinct knots of travelers, yet the traveling together under one common escort had jumbled them into a certain degree of companionship on the road; besides, on the Continent travelers are always familiar, and nothing is more motley than the groups which gather casually together in sociable conversation in the public rooms of inns.

The formidable number and formidable guard of the procaccio

[1] Sure. [2] Grandee. [3] Princess. [4] Misses.

had prevented any molestation from banditti; but every party of travelers had its tale of wonder, and one carriage vied with another in its budget of assertions and surmises. Fierce, whiskered faces had been seen peering over the rocks; carbines and stilettos gleaming from among the bushes; suspicious-looking fellows, with flapped hats, and scowling eyes, had occasionally reconnoitered a straggling carriage, but had disappeared on seeing the guard.

The fair Venetian listened to all these stories with that avidity with which we always pamper any feeling of alarm; even the Englishman began to feel interested in the common topic, desirous of getting more correct information than mere flying reports. Conquering, therefore, that shyness which is prone to keep an Englishman solitary in crowds, he approached one of the talking groups, the oracle of which was a tall, thin Italian, with long, aquiline nose, a high forehead, and lively, prominent eye, beaming from under a green velvet traveling cap, with gold tassel. He was of Rome, a surgeon by profession, a poet by choice, and something of an improvisatore.[1]

In the present instance, however, he was talking in plain prose, but holding forth with the fluency of one who talks well, and likes to exert his talent. A question or two from the Englishman drew copious replies, for an Englishman sociable among strangers is regarded as a phenomenon on the Continent, and always treated with attention for the rarity's sake. The improvisatore gave much the same account of the banditti that I have already furnished.

"But why does not the police exert itself, and root them out?" demanded the Englishman.

"Because the police is too weak, and the banditti are too strong," replied the other. "To root them out would be a more difficult task than you imagine. They are connected, and almost identified, with the mountain peasantry and the people of the villages. The numerous bands have an understanding with each other, and with the country round. A gendarme cannot stir

[1] One who composes or recites offhand.

without their being aware of it. They have their scouts everywhere, who lurk about towns, villages, and inns, mingle in every crowd, and pervade every place of resort. I should not be surprised if some one should be supervising us at this moment."

The fair Venetian looked round fearfully, and turned pale.

Here the improvisatore was interrupted by a lively Neapolitan lawyer.

"By the way," said he, "I recollect a little adventure of a learned doctor, a friend of mine, which happened in this very neighborhood, not far from the ruins of Theodoric's Castle,[1] which are on the top of those great rocky heights above the town."

A wish was, of course, expressed to hear the adventure of the doctor, by all excepting the improvisatore, who, being fond of talking and of hearing himself talk, and accustomed, moreover, to harangue without interruption, looked rather annoyed at being checked when in full career. The Neapolitan, however, took no notice of his chagrin, but related the following anecdote.

ADVENTURE OF THE LITTLE ANTIQUARY.

MY friend, the doctor, was a thorough antiquary, — a little rusty, musty old fellow, always groping among ruins. He relished a building as you Englishmen relish a cheese, — the more moldy and crumbling it was, the more it suited his taste. A shell of an old nameless temple, or the cracked walls of a broken-down amphitheater, would throw him into raptures, and he took more delight in these crusts and cheeseparings of antiquity than in the best-conditioned modern palaces.

He was a curious collector of coins also, and had just gained an accession of wealth that almost turned his brain. He had

[1] See Note 1, p. 249.

picked up, for instance, several Roman Consulars,[1] half a Roman As,[1] two Punics,[1] which had doubtless belonged to the soldiers of Hannibal,[2] having been found on the very spot where they had encamped among the Apennines. He had, moreover, one Samnite,[3] struck after the Social War,[4] and a Philistis,[5] a queen that never existed; but above all, he valued himself upon a coin, indescribable to any but the initiated in these matters, bearing a cross on one side, and a pegasus[6] on the other, and which, by some antiquarian logic, the little man adduced as an historical document illustrating the progress of Christianity.

All these precious coins he carried about him in a leathern purse, buried deep in a pocket of his little black breeches.

The last maggot[7] he had taken into his brain was to hunt after the ancient cities of the Pelasgi,[8] which are said to exist to this day among the mountains of the Abruzzi,[9] but about which a singular degree of obscurity prevails. He had made many dis-

1 Consulars, Asses, and Punics were early Roman coins.

2 Hannibal (248–183 B.C.) was the Carthaginian leader in two of the three great wars between Rome and Carthage, known as the Punic Wars (B.C. 263–241; 218–202; 150–146), which ended in the fall of Carthage. The coins struck at this time were known as "Punics."

3 The coins known as Samnites show a bull overcoming a wolf, the bull symbolizing Italy, and the wolf, Rome.

4 The Social War was a war of the Italian states against Rome (91 B.C.) for the purpose of obtaining the rights and privileges of Roman citizens. Although the states were defeated, the privileges they fought for were granted them. During the rebellion many of the states struck off coins showing their claims, victories, etc.

5 During the time of Hiero II., King of Sicily (270–216 B.C.), some remarkably fine coins were struck, bearing a portrait of a woman, and the name "Philistis." It is generally thought that Philistis was a princess of Hiero's family, either his own wife or the wife of his son Gelo.

6 See Note 5, p. 149. 7 Odd fancy or whim.

8 The Pelasgi, or Pelasgians, were an ancient race widely spread over Greece and the coasts and islands of the Ægean and Mediterranean Seas. They are supposed to have emigrated to Italy, but all accounts of the Pelasgi are to a great extent mythical.

9 A division of Italy, on the Adriatic, traversed by spurs of the Apennines.

coveries concerning them, and had recorded a great many valuable notes and memorandums on the subject, in a voluminous book which he always carried about with him, either for the purpose of frequent reference, or through fear lest the precious document should fall into the hands of brother antiquaries. He had, therefore, a large pocket in the skirt of his coat, where he bore about this inestimable tome, banging against his rear as he walked.

Thus heavily laden with the spoils of antiquity, the good little man, during a sojourn at Terracina, mounted one day the rocky cliffs which overhang the town, to visit the castle of Theodōric. He was groping about the ruins, towards the hour of sunset, buried in his reflections, his wits no doubt woolgathering[1] among the Goths[2] and Romans, when he heard footsteps behind him.

He turned, and beheld five or six young fellows, of rough, saucy demeanor, clad in a singular manner, half peasant, half huntsman, with carbines in their hands. Their whole appearance and carriage left him no doubt into what company he had fallen.

The doctor was a feeble little man, poor in look, and poorer in purse. He had but little gold or silver to be robbed of, but then he had his curious ancient coin in his breeches pocket. He had, moreover, certain other valuables, such as an old silver watch, thick as a turnip, with figures on it large enough for a clock, and a set of seals at the end of a steel chain, dangling half way down to his knees. All these were of precious esteem, being family relics. He had also a seal ring, a veritable antique intaglio, that covered half his knuckles. It was a Venus,[3] which

[1] Indulging in idle fancies or fruitless pursuits. The allusion is to the practice of gathering tufts of wool from bushes, which necessitates much wandering to little purpose.

[2] A powerful German people who played an important part in the overthrow of the Roman empire. In 272 they separated into two great divisions, the Visigoths and the Ostragoths. It was the latter who, under Theodoric the Great, conquered Italy in 493.

[3] Venus, or Aphrodite, was the goddess of beauty and love among the Romans and Greeks.

the old man almost worshiped with the zeal of a voluptuary. But what he most valued was his inestimable collection of hints relative to the Pelasgian cities, which he would gladly have given all the money in his pocket to have had safe at the bottom of his trunk in Terracina.

However, he plucked up a stout heart, at least as stout a heart as he could, seeing that he was but a puny little man at the best of times. So he wished the hunters a "*buon giorno.*"[1] They returned his salutation, giving the old gentleman a sociable slap on the back that made his heart leap into his throat.

They fell into conversation, and walked for some time together among the heights, the doctor wishing them all the while at the bottom of the crater of Vesuvius. At length they came to a small osteria[2] on the mountain, where they proposed to enter and have a cup of wine together. The doctor consented, though he would as soon have been invited to drink hemlock.

One of the gang remained sentinel at the door; the others swaggered into the house, stood their guns in the corner of the room, and each drawing a pistol or stiletto out of his belt, laid it upon the table. They now drew benches round the board, called lustily for wine, and hailing the doctor as though he had been a boon companion of long standing, insisted upon his sitting down and making merry.

The worthy man complied with forced grimace, but with fear and trembling, sitting uneasily on the edge of his chair, eying ruefully the black-muzzled pistols and cold, naked stilettos, and supping down heartburn with every drop of liquor. His new comrades, however, pushed the bottle bravely, and plied him vigorously. They sang, they laughed, told excellent stories of their robberies and combats, mingled with many ruffian jokes, and the little doctor was fain to laugh at all their cutthroat pleasantries, though his heart was dying away at the very bottom of his bosom.

By their own account, they were young men from the villages, who had recently taken up this line of life out of the wild caprice

[1] Good day. [2] Inn.

of youth. They talked of their murderous exploits as a sportsman talks of his amusements; to shoot down a traveler seemed of little more consequence to them than to shoot a hare. They spoke with rapture of the glorious roving life they led,—free as birds, here to-day, gone to-morrow, ranging the forests, climbing the rocks, scouring the valleys, the world their own wherever they could lay hold of it, full purses, merry companions, pretty women. The little antiquary got fuddled with their talk and their wine, for they did not spare bumpers. He half forgot his fears, his seal ring, and his family watch; even the treatise on the Pelasgian cities, which was warming under him, for a time faded from his memory in the glowing picture that they drew. He declares that he no longer wonders at the prevalence of this robber mania among the mountains, for he felt at the time that, had he been a young man and a strong man, and had there been no danger of the galleys in the background, he should have been half tempted himself to turn bandit.

At length the hour of separating arrived. The doctor was suddenly called to himself and his fears by seeing the robbers resume their weapons. He now quaked for his valuables, and, above all, for his antiquarian treatise. He endeavored, however, to look cool and unconcerned, and drew from out his deep pocket a long, lank, leathern purse, far gone into consumption, at the bottom of which a few coins chinked with the trembling of his hand.

The chief of the party observed his movement, and laying his hand upon the antiquary's shoulder, "Harkee! Signor Dottore!"[1] said he, "we have drunk together as friends and comrades; let us part as such. We understand you. We know who and what you are, for we know who everybody is that sleeps at Terracina, or that puts foot upon the road. You are a rich man, but you carry all your wealth in your head. We cannot get at it, and we should not know what to do with it if we could. I see you are uneasy about your ring; but don't worry yourself, it is not worth

[1] Listen, Sir Doctor.

taking. You think it an antique, but it's a counterfeit—a mere sham."

Here the ire of the antiquary rose; the doctor forgot himself in his zeal for the character of his ring. Heaven and earth! his Venus a sham? Had they pronounced the wife of his bosom "no better than she should be," he could not have been more indignant. He fired up in vindication of his intaglio.

"Nay, nay," continued the robber, "we have no time to dispute about it; value it as you please. Come, you're a brave little old signor. One more cup of wine, and we'll pay the reckoning. No compliments; you shall not pay a grain; you are our guest. I insist upon it. So now make the best of your way back to Terracina; it's growing late. Buon viaggio![1] And harkee, take care how you wander among these mountains; you may not always fall into such good company."

They shouldered their guns, sprang gayly up the rocks, and the little doctor hobbled back to Terracina, rejoicing that the robbers had left his watch, his coins, and his treatise unmolested, but still indignant that they should have pronounced his Venus an impostor.

The improvisatore had shown many symptoms of impatience during this recital. He saw his theme in danger of being taken out of his hands, which to an able talker is always a grievance, but to an improvisatore is an absolute calamity; and then for it to be taken away by a Neapolitan was still more vexatious, the inhabitants of the different Italian states[2] having an implacable jealousy of each other in all things, great and small. He took advantage of the first pause of the Neapolitan to catch hold again of the thread of the conversation.

[1] A pleasant journey.

[2] Until within recent times, Italy was composed of a number of states, either independent, or tributary to foreign powers, and had no organized existence as a nation. It was not until 1861 that, through the efforts of Cavour and other liberal-minded Italians, the unification of Italy was effected and the Italian kingdom organized.

"As I observed before," said he, "the prowlings of the banditti are so extensive; they are so much in league with one another, and so interwoven with various ranks of society"—

"For that matter," said the Neapolitan, "I have heard that your government has had some understanding with those gentry, or, at least, has winked at their misdeeds."

"My government?" said the Roman, impatiently.

"Ay, they say that Cardinal Gonsalvi"[1]—

"Hush!" said the Roman, holding up his finger, and rolling his large eyes about the room.

"Nay, I only repeat what I heard commonly rumored in Rome," replied the Neapolitan sturdily. "It was openly said that the Cardinal had been up to the mountains, and had an interview with some of the chiefs. And I have been told, moreover, that, while honest people have been kicking their heels in the Cardinal's antechamber, waiting by the hour for admittance, one of those stiletto-looking fellows has elbowed his way through the crowd, and entered without ceremony into the Cardinal's presence."

"I know," observed the improvisatore, "that there have been such reports, and it is not impossible that government may have made use of these men at particular periods, such as at the time of your late abortive revolution, when your Carbonari[2] were so

[1] Cardinal Ercole Consalvi or Gonsalvi (1757–1824), an eminent Roman statesman. His policy was liberal and humane. Capital punishment and torture for heresy were abolished by him, and he enacted new codes of laws. During the pope's absence he was virtual sovereign of Rome.

[2] The Italian sovereigns, on returning to their respective states after Napoleon Bonaparte's downfall, acted very tyrannically and tried to abandon all reforms. This course of action gave rise to the formation of a secret society, which originated among the charcoal burners of the mountains, and was therefore known as the "Carbonari" (charcoal burners), but which soon spread throughout the peninsula. The object of the society was to change the government to a republic. In July, 1820, the army at Naples broke out in open mutiny, but the Austrian troops entered Naples, and crushed the revolution in 1821.

busy with their machinations all over the country. The information which such men could collect, who were familiar, not merely with the recesses and secret places of the mountains, but also with the dark and dangerous recesses of society; who knew every suspicious character, and all his movements and all his lurkings; in a word, who knew all that was plotting in a world of mischief,— the utility of such men as instruments in the hands of government was too obvious to be overlooked, and Cardinal Gonsalvi, as a politic statesman, may, perhaps, have made use of them. Besides, he knew that, with all their atrocities, the robbers were always respectful towards the Church, and devout in their religion."

"Religion! religion!" echoed the Englishman.

"Yes, religion," repeated the Roman. "They have each their patron saint. They will cross themselves and say their prayers, whenever, in their mountain haunts, they hear the matin or the Ave Maria bells sounding from the valleys, and will often descend from their retreats, and run imminent risks, to visit some favorite shrine. I recollect an instance in point.

"I was one evening in the village of Frascati,[1] which stands on the beautiful brow of a hill rising from the Campagna[2] just below the Abruzzi Mountains. The people, as is usual in fine evenings in our Italian towns and villages, were recreating themselves in the open air, and chatting in groups in the public square. While I was conversing with a knot of friends, I noticed a tall fellow, wrapped in a great mantle, passing across the square, but skulking along in the dusk, as if anxious to avoid observation.

[1] A town of Italy twelve miles southeast of Rome. On the brow of a hill are the remains of the ancient Tusculum, where were favorite residences of Cicero, Lucullus, and other famous Romans (see Note 2, p. 292).

[2] An old province of Italy nearly corresponding in limits to ancient Latium, extending along the western coast from Civita Vecchia to the Pontine Marshes, and inland to the Albian and Sabine Hills, Rome being near its center. Although at one time one of the richest countries of the world, it is now nearly destitute of inhabitants.

The people drew back as he passed. It was whispered to me that he was a notorious bandit."

"But why was he not immediately seized?" said the Englishman.

"Because it was nobody's business; because nobody wished to incur the vengeance of his comrades; because there were not sufficient gendarmes near to insure security against the number of desperadoes he might have at hand; because the gendarmes might not have received particular instructions with respect to him, and might not feel disposed to engage in a hazardous conflict without compulsion. In short, I might give you a thousand reasons rising out of the state of our government and manners, not one of which, after all, might appear satisfactory."

The Englishman shrugged his shoulders with an air of contempt.

"I have been told," added the Roman, rather quickly, "that even in your metropolis of London, notorious thieves, well-known to the police as such, walk the streets at noonday in search of their prey, and are not molested unless caught in the very act of robbery."

The Englishman gave another shrug, but with a different expression.

"Well, sir, I fixed my eye on this daring wolf, thus prowling through the fold, and saw him enter a church. I was curious to witness his devotion. You know our spacious, magnificent churches. The one in which he entered was vast, and shrouded in the dusk of evening. At the extremity of the long aisles a couple of tapers feebly glimmered on the grand altar. In one of the side chapels was a votive candle placed before the image of a saint. Before this image the robber had prostrated himself. His mantle, partly falling off from his shoulders as he knelt, revealed a form of Herculean strength; a stiletto and pistol glittered in his belt; and the light, falling on his countenance, showed features not unhandsome, but strongly and fiercely characterized. As he prayed he became vehemently agitated; his lips quivered, sighs and

murmurs, almost groans, burst from him; he beat his breast with violence, then clasped his hands and wrung them convulsively, as he extended them towards the image. Never had I seen such a terrific picture of remorse. I felt fearful of being discovered watching him, and withdrew. Shortly afterwards I saw him issue from the church, wrapped in his mantle. He recrossed the square and no doubt returned to the mountains with a disburdened conscience, ready to incur a fresh arrear of crime."

Here the Neapolitan was about to get hold of the conversation, and had just preluded with the ominous remark, "That puts me in mind of a circumstance," when the improvisatore, too adroit to suffer himself to be again superseded, went on, pretending not to hear the interruption.

"Among the many circumstances connected with the banditti which serve to render the traveler uneasy and insecure, is the understanding which they sometimes have with innkeepers. Many an isolated inn among the lonely parts of the Roman territories, and especially about the mountains, is of a dangerous and perfidious character. They are places where the banditti gather information, and where the unwary traveler, remote from hearing or assistance, is betrayed to the midnight dagger. The robberies committed at such inns are often accompanied by the most atrocious murders, for it is only by the complete extermination of their victims that the assassins can escape detection. I recollect an adventure," added he, "which occurred at one of these solitary mountain inns, which, as you all seem in a mood for robber anecdotes, may not be uninteresting."

Having secured the attention, and awakened the curiosity, of the bystanders, he paused for a moment, rolled up his large eyes as improvisatori are apt to do when they would recollect an impromptu, and then related with great dramatic effect the following story, which had, doubtless, been well prepared and digested beforehand.

THE BELATED TRAVELERS.

IT was late one evening that a carriage, drawn by mules, slowly toiled its way up one of the passes of the Apennines. It was through one of the wildest defiles, where a hamlet occurred only at distant intervals, perched on the summit of some rocky height, or the white towers of a convent peeped out from among the thick mountain foliage. The carriage was of ancient and ponderous construction. Its faded embellishments spoke of former splendor, but its crazy springs and axletrees creaked out the tale of present decline. Within was seated a tall, thin old gentleman, in a kind of military traveling dress, and a foraging cap trimmed with fur, though the gray locks which stole from under it hinted that his fighting days were over. Beside him was a pale, beautiful girl of eighteen, dressed in something of a northern or Polish costume. One servant was seated in front, — a rusty, crusty-looking fellow, with a scar across his face, an orange-tawny *schnurbart*, or pair of mustaches, bristling from under his nose, and altogether the air of an old soldier.

It was, in fact, the equipage of a Polish nobleman; a wreck of one of those princely families once of almost oriental magnificence, but broken down and impoverished by the disasters of Poland. The count, like many other generous spirits, had been found guilty of the crime of patriotism, and was, in a manner, an exile from his country. He had resided for some time in the first cities of Italy, for the education of his daughter, in whom all his cares and pleasures were now centered. He had taken her into society, where her beauty and her accomplishments gained her many admirers, and had she not been the daughter of a poor, broken-down, Polish nobleman, it is more than probable many would have contended for her hand. Suddenly, however, her health became delicate and drooping, her gayety fled with the roses of her cheek, and she sank into silence and debility. The old count saw the change with the solicitude of a parent. "We

must try a change of air and scene," said he; and in a few days the old family carriage was rumbling among the Apennines.

Their only attendant was the veteran Caspar, who had been born in the family, and grown rusty in its service. He had followed his master in all his fortunes, had fought by his side, had stood over him when fallen in battle, and had received, in his defense, the saber cut which added such grimness to his countenance. He was now his valet, his steward, his butler, his factotum. The only being that rivaled his master in his affections was his youthful mistress. She had grown up under his eye; he had led her by the hand when she was a child, and he now looked upon her with the fondness of a parent. Nay, he even took the freedom of a parent in giving his blunt opinion on all matters which he thought were for her good, and felt a parent's vanity at seeing her gazed at and admired.

The evening was thickening;[1] they had been for some time passing through narrow gorges of the mountains, along the edges of a tumbling stream. The scenery was lonely and savage. The rocks often beetled over the road, with flocks of white goats browsing on their brinks, and gazing down upon the travelers. They had between two or three leagues yet to go before they could reach any village; yet the muleteer, Pietro,[2] a tippling old fellow, who had refreshed himself at the last halting place with a more than ordinary quantity of wine, sat singing and talking alternately to his mules, and suffering them to lag on at a snail's pace, in spite of the frequent entreaties of the count and maledictions of Caspar.

The clouds began to roll in heavy masses along the mountains, shrouding their summits from view. The air was damp and chilly. The count's solicitude on his daughter's account overcame his usual patience. He leaned from the carriage, and called to old Pietro in an angry tone.

"Forward!" said he. "It will be midnight before we arrive at our inn."

[1] Becoming darker. [2] Peter.

"Yonder it is, signor," said the muleteer.

"Where?" demanded the count.

"Yonder," said Pietro, pointing to a desolate pile about a quarter of a league distant.

"That the place? Why, it looks more like a ruin than an inn. I thought we were to put up for the night at a comfortable village."

Here Pietro uttered a string of piteous exclamations and ejaculations, such as are ever at the tip of the tongue of a delinquent muleteer. Such roads, and such mountains! And then his poor animals were wayworn and leg weary; they would fall lame; they would never be able to reach the village. And then what could his Excellenza wish for better than the inn, a perfect castello![1]—a palazzo![2] and such people!—and such a larder!—and such beds! His Excellenza might fare as sumptuously and sleep as soundly there as a prince!"

The count was easily persuaded, for he was anxious to get his daughter out of the night air; so in a little while the old carriage rattled and jingled into the great gateway of the inn.

The building did certainly in some measure answer to the muleteer's description. It was large enough for either castle or palace, built in a strong, but simple and almost rude, style, with a great quantity of waste room. It had in fact been, in former times, a hunting seat of one of the Italian princes. There was space enough within its walls and outbuildings to have accommodated a little army. A scanty household seemed now to people this dreary mansion. The faces that presented themselves on the arrival of the travelers were begrimed with dirt, and scowling in their expression. They all knew old Pietro, however, and gave him a welcome as he entered, singing and talking, and almost whooping, into the gateway.

The hostess of the inn waited herself on the count and his daughter, to show them the apartments. They were conducted through a long, gloomy corridor, and then through a suite of cham-

[1] Castle. [2] Palace.

bers opening into each other, with lofty ceilings, and great beams extending across them. Everything, however, had a wretched, squalid look. The walls were damp and bare, excepting that here and there hung some great painting, large enough for a chapel, and blackened out of all distinction.

They chose two bedrooms, one within another, the inner one for the daughter. The bedsteads were massive and misshapen; but on examining the beds so vaunted by old Pietro, they found them stuffed with fibers of hemp knotted in great lumps. The count shrugged his shoulders, but there was no choice left.

The chilliness of the apartments crept to their bones, and they were glad to return to a common chamber, or kind of hall, where was a fire burning in a huge cavern, miscalled a chimney. A quantity of green wood, just thrown on, puffed out volumes of smoke. The room corresponded to the rest of the mansion. The floor was paved and dirty; a great oaken table stood in the center, immovable from its size and weight. The only thing that contradicted this prevalent air of indigence was the dress of the hostess. She was a slattern, of course, yet her garments, though dirty and negligent, were of costly materials. She wore several rings of great value on her fingers, and jewels in her ears, and round her neck was a string of large pearls, to which was attached a sparkling crucifix. She had the remains of beauty, yet there was something in the expression of her countenance that inspired the young lady with singular aversion. She was officious and obsequious in her attentions, and both the count and his daughter felt relieved when she consigned them to the care of a dark, sullen-looking servant maid, and went off to superintend the supper.

Caspar was indignant at the muleteer for having, either through negligence or design, subjected his master and mistress to such quarters, and vowed by his mustaches to have revenge on the old varlet the moment they were safe out from among the mountains. He kept up a continual quarrel with the sulky servant maid, which only served to increase the sinister expression with

which she regarded the travelers from under her strong, dark eyebrows.

As to the count, he was a good-humored, passive traveler. Perhaps real misfortunes had subdued his spirit, and rendered him tolerant of many of those petty evils which make prosperous men miserable. He drew a large, broken armchair to the fireside for his daughter, and another for himself, and seizing an enormous pair of tongs, endeavored to rearrange the wood so as to produce a blaze. His efforts, however, were only repaid by thicker puffs of smoke, which almost overcame the good gentleman's patience. He would draw back, cast a look upon his delicate daughter, then upon the cheerless, squalid apartment, and, shrugging his shoulders, would give a fresh stir to the fire.

Of all the miseries of a comfortless inn, however, there is none greater than sulky attendants. The good count for some time bore the smoke in silence, rather than address himself to the scowling servant maid. At length he was compelled to beg for drier firewood. The woman retired muttering. On reëntering the room hastily, with an armful of fagots, her foot slipped; she fell, and striking her head against the corner of a chair, cut her temple severely.

The blow stunned her for a time, and the wound bled profusely. When she recovered, she found the count's daughter administering to her wound, and binding it up with her own handkerchief. It was such an attention as any woman of ordinary feeling would have yielded; but perhaps there was something in the appearance of the lovely being who bent over her, or in the tones of her voice, that touched the heart of the woman, unused to be administered to by such hands. Certain it is, she was strongly affected. She caught the delicate hand of the Polonaise, and pressed it fervently to her lips.

"May San Francesco[1] watch over you, signora!" exclaimed she.

[1] St. Francis (1182–1226), the founder of the celebrated order of mendicant friars known as Franciscans. He was canonized by Pope Gregory.

A new arrival broke the stillness of the inn. It was a Spanish princess with a numerous retinue. The courtyard was in an uproar, the house in a bustle. The landlady hurried to attend such distinguished guests, and the poor count and his daughter, and their supper, were for a moment forgotten. The veteran Caspar muttered Polish maledictions enough to agonize an Italian ear; but it was impossible to convince the hostess of the superiority of his old master and young mistress to the whole nobility of Spain.

The noise of the arrival had attracted the daughter to the window just as the newcomers had alighted. A young cavalier sprang out of the carriage and handed out the princess. The latter was a little shriveled old lady, with a face of parchment, and sparkling black eyes; she was richly and gayly dressed, and walked with the assistance of a gold-headed cane as high as herself. The young man was tall and elegantly formed. The count's daughter shrank back at the sight of him, though the deep frame of the window screened her from observation. She gave a heavy sigh as she closed the casement. What that sigh meant I cannot say. Perhaps it was at the contrast between the splendid equipage of the princess, and the crazy, rheumatic-looking old vehicle of her father, which stood hard by. Whatever might be the reason, the young lady closed the casement with a sigh. She returned to her chair; a slight shivering passed over her delicate frame; she leaned her elbow on the arm of the chair, rested her pale cheek in the palm of her hand, and looked mournfully into the fire.

The count thought she appeared paler than usual.

"Does anything ail thee, my child?" said he.

"Nothing, dear father!" replied she, laying her hand within his, and looking up smiling in his face; but as she said so, a treacherous tear rose suddenly to her eye, and she turned away her head.

"The air of the window has chilled thee," said the count, fondly, "but a good night's rest will make all well again."

The supper table was at length laid, and the supper about to

be served, when the hostess appeared, with her usual obsequiousness, apologizing for showing in the newcomers; but the night air was cold, and there was no other chamber in the inn with a fire in it. She had scarcely made the apology when the princess entered, leaning on the arm of the elegant young man.

The count immediately recognized her for a lady whom he had met frequently in society, both at Rome and Naples, and to whose conversaziones,[1] in fact, he had been constantly invited. The cavalier, too, was her nephew and heir, who had been greatly admired in the gay circles both for his merits and prospects, and who had once been on a visit at the same time with his daughter and himself at the villa of a nobleman near Naples. Report had recently affianced him to a rich Spanish heiress.

The meeting was agreeable to both the count and the princess. The former was a gentleman of the old school, courteous in the extreme; the princess had been a belle in her youth, and a woman of fashion all her life, and liked to be attended to.

The young man approached the daughter and began something of a complimentary observation, but his manner was embarrassed, and his compliment ended in an indistinct murmur, while the daughter bowed without looking up, moved her lips without articulating a word, and sank again into her chair, where she sat gazing into the fire, with a thousand varying expressions passing over her countenance.

This singular greeting of the young people was not perceived by the old ones, who were occupied at the time with their own courteous salutations. It was arranged that they should sup together, and as the princess traveled with her own cook, a very tolerable supper soon smoked upon the board. This, too, was assisted by choice wines and liquors and delicate confitures[2] brought from one of her carriages, for she was a veteran epicure, and curious in her relish for the good things of this world. She was, in fact, a vivacious little old lady, who mingled the woman

[1] Meetings for conversation, especially on literary subjects.

[2] Sweetmeats.

of dissipation with the devotee. She was actually on her way to Loretto [1] to expiate a long life of gallantries and peccadillos by a rich offering at the holy shrine. She was, to be sure, rather a luxurious penitent, and a contrast to the primitive pilgrims, with scrip,[2] and staff, and cockleshell; [3] but then it would be unreasonable to expect such self-denial from people of fashion, and there was not a doubt of the ample efficacy of the rich crucifixes, and golden vessels, and jeweled ornaments, which she was bearing to the treasury of the blessed Virgin.

The princess and the count chatted much during supper about the scenes and society in which they had mingled, and did not notice that they had all the conversation to themselves; the young people were silent and constrained. The daughter ate nothing, in spite of the politeness of the princess, who continually pressed her to taste of one or other of the delicacies. The count shook his head.

"She is not well this evening," said he; "I thought she would have fainted just now as she was looking out of the window at your carriage on its arrival."

A crimson glow flushed to the very temples of the daughter; but she leaned over her plate, and her tresses cast a shade over her countenance.

When supper was over, they drew their chairs about the great fireplace. The flame and smoke had subsided, and a heap of glowing embers diffused a grateful warmth. A guitar, which had been brought from the count's carriage, leaned against the wall; the princess perceived it. "Can we not have a little music before parting for the night?" demanded she.

[1] A city of Italy in the compartimento (division) Marches, three miles from the Adriatic. It owes its origin to the house of the Virgin, the Santa Casa, which, according to tradition, was brought thither from Nazareth by the angels. Over it a magnificent church has been built, and around it the town has grown up. The holy shrine attracts many visitors.

[2] A small bag or satchel.

[3] Pilgrims wore cockleshells on their hats as tokens, which, being blessed by the priest, were considered as charms against evil spirits.

The count was proud of his daughter's accomplishment, and joined in the request. The young man made an effort of politeness, and taking up the guitar, presented it, though in an embarrassed manner, to the fair musician. She would have declined it, but was too much confused to do so; indeed, she was so nervous and agitated that she dared not trust her voice to make an excuse. She touched the instrument with a faltering hand, and, after preluding a little, accompanied herself in several Polish airs. Her father's eyes glistened as he sat gazing on her. Even the crusty Caspar lingered in the room, partly through a fondness for the music of his native country, but chiefly through his pride in the musician. Indeed the melody of the voice and the delicacy of the touch were enough to have charmed more fastidious ears. The little princess nodded her head and tapped her hand to the music, though exceedingly out of time, while the nephew sat buried in profound contemplation of a black picture on the opposite wall.

"And now," said the count, patting her cheek fondly, "one more favor. Let the princess hear that little Spanish air you were so fond of. You can't think," added he, "what a proficiency she has made in your language, though she has been a sad girl, and neglected it of late."

The color flushed the pale cheek of the daughter. She hesitated, murmured something, but with sudden effort collected herself, struck the guitar boldly, and began. It was a Spanish romance, with something of love and melancholy in it. She gave the first stanza with great expression, for the tremulous, melting tones of her voice went to the heart; but her articulation failed, her lips quivered, the song died away, and she burst into tears.

The count folded her tenderly in his arms. "Thou art not well, my child," said he, "and I am tasking thee cruelly. Retire to thy chamber, and God bless thee!" She bowed to the company without raising her eyes, and glided out of the room.

The count shook his head as the door closed. "Something is the matter with that child," said he, "which I cannot divine.

She has lost all health and spirits lately. She was always a tender flower, and I had much pains to rear her. Excuse a father's foolishness," continued he, "but I have seen much trouble in my family, and this poor girl is all that is now left to me, and she used to be so lively"—

"Maybe she's in love," said the little princess, with a shrewd nod of the head.

"Impossible!" replied the good count, artlessly. "She has never mentioned a word of such a thing to me."

How little did the worthy gentleman dream of the thousand cares and griefs and mighty love concerns which agitate a virgin heart, and which a timid girl scarcely breathes unto herself!

The nephew of the princess rose abruptly and walked about the room.

When she found herself alone in her chamber, the feelings of the young lady, so long restrained, broke forth with violence. She opened the casement, that the cool air might blow upon her throbbing temples. Perhaps there was some little pride or pique mingled with her emotions, though her gentle nature did not seem calculated to harbor any such angry inmate.

"He saw me weep," said she, with a sudden mantling of the cheek and a swelling of the throat, "but no matter, no matter!"

And so saying she threw her white arms across the window frame, buried her face in them, and abandoned herself to an agony of tears. She remained lost in a reverie until the sound of her father's and Caspar's voices in the adjoining room gave token that the party had retired for the night. The lights gleaming from window to window showed that they were conducting the princess to her apartments, which were in the opposite wing of the inn, and she distinctly saw the figure of the nephew as he passed one of the casements.

She heaved a deep, heart-drawn sigh, and was about to close the lattice, when her attention was caught by words spoken below her window by two persons who had just turned an angle of the building.

"But what will become of the poor young lady?" said a voice, which she recognized for that of the servant woman.

"Pooh! she must take her chance," was the reply from old Pietro.

"But cannot she be spared?" asked the other entreatingly; "she's so kind-hearted!"

"Cospetto![1] what has got into thee?" replied the other petulantly; "would you mar the whole business for the sake of a silly girl?" By this time they had got so far from the window that the Polonaise could hear nothing further. There was something in this fragment of conversation calculated to alarm. Did it relate to herself, and if so, what was this impending danger from which it was entreated that she might be spared? She was several times on the point of tapping at her father's door, to tell him what she had heard, but she might have been mistaken; she might have heard indistinctly; the conversation might have alluded to some one else; at any rate, it was too indefinite to lead to any conclusion. While in this state of irresolution, she was startled by a low knock against the wainscot in a remote part of her gloomy chamber. On holding up the light, she beheld a small door there which she had not before remarked. It was bolted on the inside. She advanced, and demanded who knocked, and was answered in the voice of the female domestic. On opening the door, the woman stood before it, pale and agitated. She entered softly, laying her finger on her lips as in sign of caution and secrecy.

"Fly!" said she; "leave this house instantly, or you are lost."

The young lady, trembling with alarm, demanded an explanation.

"I have no time;" replied the woman, "I dare not—I shall be missed if I linger here; but fly instantly, or you are lost."

"And leave my father?"

"Where is he?"

"In the adjoining chamber."

[1] An Italian exclamation equivalent to the English "zounds!"

"Call him, then, but lose no time."

The young lady knocked at her father's door. He was not yet retired to bed. She hurried into his room, and told him of the fearful warnings she had received. The count returned with her into the chamber, followed by Caspar. His questions soon drew the truth out of the embarrassed answers of the woman. The inn was beset by robbers. They were to be introduced after midnight, when the attendants of the princess and the rest of the travelers were sleeping and would be an easy prey.

"But we can barricade the inn; we can defend ourselves," said the count.

"What! when the people of the inn are in league with the banditti?"

"How, then, are we to escape? Can we not order out the carriage and depart?"

"San Francesco! for what? To give the alarm that the plot is discovered? That would make the robbers desperate, and bring them on you at once. They have had notice of the rich booty in the inn, and will not easily let it escape them."

"But how else are we to get off?"

"There is a horse behind the inn," said the woman, "from which the man has just dismounted who has been to summon the aid of part of the band at a distance."

"One horse, and there are three of us!" said the count.

"And the Spanish princess," cried the daughter anxiously. "How can she be extricated from the danger?"

"Diavolo![1] what is she to me?" said the woman, in sudden passion. "It is *you* I come to save, and you will betray me, and we shall all be lost. Hark!" continued she, "I am called—I shall be discovered—one word more. This door leads by a staircase to the courtyard. Under the shed, in the rear of the yard, is a small door leading out to the fields. You will find a horse there. Mount it; make a circuit under the shadow of a ridge of rocks that you will see; proceed cautiously and quietly until you

[1] The devil.

cross a brook, and find yourself on the road just where there are three white crosses nailed against a tree; then put your horse to his speed, and make the best of your way to the village. But, recollect, my life is in your hands. Say nothing of what you have heard or seen, whatever may happen at this inn."

The woman hurried away. A short and agitated consultation took place between the count, his daughter, and the veteran Caspar. The young lady seemed to have lost all apprehension for herself in her solicitude for the safety of the princess. "To fly in selfish silence, and leave her to be massacred!" A shuddering seized her at the very thought. The gallantry of the count, too, revolted at the idea. He could not consent to turn his back upon a party of helpless travelers, and leave them in ignorance of the danger which hung over them.

"But what is to become of the young lady," said Caspar, "if the alarm is given and the inn thrown in a tumult? What may happen to her in a chance medley affray?"

Here the feelings of the father were aroused; he looked upon his lovely, helpless child, and trembled at the chance of her falling into the hands of ruffians.

The daughter, however, thought nothing of herself. "The princess! the princess! only let the princess know her danger!" She was willing to share it with her.

At length Caspar interfered, with the zeal of a faithful old servant. No time was to be lost; the first thing was to get the young lady out of danger. "Mount the horse," said he to the count, "take her behind you, and fly! Make for the village, rouse the inhabitants, and send assistance. Leave me here to give the alarm to the princess and her people. I am an old soldier, and I think we shall be able to stand siege until you send us aid."

The daughter would again have insisted on staying with the princess.

"For what?" said old Caspar bluntly. "You could do no good; you would be in the way; we should have to take care of you instead of ourselves."

There was no answering these objections; the count seized his pistols, and taking his daughter under his arm, moved towards the staircase. The young lady paused, stepped back, and said, faltering with agitation, "There is a young cavalier with the princess—her nephew; perhaps he may"—

"I understand you, mademoiselle," replied old Caspar, with a significant nod; "not a hair of his head shall suffer harm if I can help it."

The young lady blushed deeper than ever; she had not anticipated being so thoroughly understood by the blunt old servant.

"That is not what I mean," said she, hesitating. She would have added something, or made some explanation, but the moments were precious and her father hurried her away.

They found their way through the courtyard to the small postern gate, where the horse stood fastened to a ring in the wall. The count mounted, took his daughter behind him, and they proceeded as quietly as possible in the direction which the woman had pointed out. Many a fearful and anxious look did the daughter cast back upon the gloomy pile; the lights which had feebly twinkled through the dusky casements were one by one disappearing, a sign that the inmates were gradually sinking to repose, and she trembled with impatience lest succor should not arrive until that repose had been fatally interrupted.

They passed silently and safely along the skirts of the rocks, protected from observation by their overhanging shadows. They crossed the brook, and reached the place where three white crosses nailed against a tree told of some murder that had been committed there. Just as they had reached this ill-omened spot they beheld several men in the gloom coming down a craggy defile among the rocks.

"Who goes there?" exclaimed a voice. The count put spurs to his horse, but one of the men sprang forward and seized the bridle. The horse started back and reared, and had not the young lady clung to her father she would have been thrown off. The count leaned forward, put a pistol to the very head of the

ruffian, and fired. The latter fell dead. The horse sprang forward. Two or three shots were fired, which whistled by the fugitives, but only served to augment their speed. They reached the village in safety.

The whole place was soon roused; but such was the awe in which the banditti were held that the inhabitants shrunk at the idea of encountering them. A desperate band had for some time infested that pass through the mountains, and the inn had long been suspected of being one of those horrible places where the unsuspicious wayfarer is entrapped and silently disposed of. The rich ornaments worn by the slattern hostess of the inn had excited heavy suspicions. Several instances had occurred of small parties of travelers disappearing mysteriously on that road, who, it was supposed at first, had been carried off by the robbers for the purpose of ransom, but who had never been heard of more. Such were the tales buzzed in the ears of the count by the villagers, as he endeavored to rouse them to the rescue of the princess and her train from their perilous situation. The daughter seconded the exertions of her father with all the eloquence of prayers, and tears, and beauty. Every moment that elapsed increased her anxiety until it became agonizing. Fortunately there was a body of gendarmes resting at the village. A number of the young villagers volunteered to accompany them, and the little army was put in motion. The count, having deposited his daughter in a place of safety, was too much of the old soldier not to hasten to the scene of danger. It would be difficult to paint the anxious agitation of the young lady while awaiting the result.

The party arrived at the inn just in time. The robbers, finding their plans discovered and the travelers prepared for their reception, had become open and furious in their attack. The princess's party had barricaded themselves in one suite of apartments, and repulsed the robbers from the doors and windows. Caspar had shown the generalship of a veteran, and the nephew of the princess, the dashing valor of a young soldier. Their am-

munition, however, was nearly exhausted, and they would have found it difficult to hold out much longer, when a discharge from the musketry of the gendarmes gave them the joyful tidings of succor.

A fierce fight ensued, for part of the robbers were surprised in the inn, and had to stand siege in their turn, while their comrades made desperate attempts to relieve them from under cover of the neighboring rocks and thickets.

I cannot pretend to give a minute account of the fight, as I have heard it related in a variety of ways. Suffice it to say, the robbers were defeated, several of them killed and several taken prisoners, which last, together with the people of the inn, were either executed or sent to the galleys.

I picked up these particulars in the course of a journey which I made some time after the event had taken place. I passed by the very inn. It was then dismantled, excepting one wing, in which a body of gendarmes was stationed. They pointed out to me the shot holes in the window frames, the walls, and the panels of the doors. There were a number of withered limbs dangling from the branches of a neighboring tree, and blackening in the air, which I was told were the limbs of the robbers who had been slain and the culprits who had been executed. The whole place had a dismal, wild, forlorn look.

"Were any of the princess's party killed?" inquired the Englishman.

"As far as I can recollect, there were two or three."

"Not the nephew, I trust?" said the fair Venetian.

"Oh, no; he hastened with the count to relieve the anxiety of the daughter by the assurances of victory. The young lady had been sustained through the interval of suspense by the very intensity of her feelings. The moment she saw her father returning in safety, accompanied by the nephew of the princess, she uttered a cry of rapture, and fainted. Happily, however, she soon recovered, and, what is more, was married shortly afterwards to the young cavalier, and the whole party accompanied

the old princess in her pilgrimage to Loretto, where her votive offerings may still be seen in the treasury of the Santa Casa."[1]

It would be tedious to follow the devious course of the conversation as it wound through a maze of stories of the kind, until it was taken up by two other travelers who had come under convoy of the procaccio, Mr. Hobbs and Mr. Dobbs, a linen draper and a greengrocer, just returning from a hasty tour in Greece and the Holy Land. They were full of the story of Alderman Popkins. They were astonished that the robbers should dare to molest a man of his importance on 'Change,[2] he being an eminent drysalter[3] of Throgmorton Street, and a magistrate to boot.

In fact, the story of the Popkins family was but too true. It was attested by too many present to be for a moment doubted, and from the contradictory and concordant testimony of half a score, all eager to relate it, and all talking at the same time, the Englishman was enabled to gather the following particulars.

ADVENTURE OF THE POPKINS FAMILY.

IT was but a few days before that the carriage of Alderman Popkins had driven up to the inn of Terracina. Those who have seen an English family carriage on the Continent must have remarked the sensation it produces. It is an epitome of England, a little morsel of the old Island rolling about the world; everything about it compact, snug, finished, and fitting; the wheels turning on patent axles without rattling; the body hanging so well on its springs, yielding to every motion, yet protecting from every shock; the ruddy faces gaping from the windows,—sometimes of a portly old citizen, sometimes of a voluminous dowager,

[1] See Note 1, p. 277.

[2] An abbreviation of "Exchange," a place for mercantile transactions.

[3] A dealer in salted or dried meats, pickles, etc.

and sometimes of a fine, fresh hoyden just from boarding school; and then the dickeys, loaded with well-dressed servants, beef-fed and bluff, looking down from their heights with contempt on all the world around, profoundly ignorant of the country and the people, and devoutly certain that everything not English must be wrong.

Such was the carriage of Alderman Popkins as it made its appearance at Terracina. The courier who had preceded it to order horses, and who was a Neapolitan, had given a magnificent account of the richness and greatness of his master, blundering, with an Italian's splendor of imagination, about the alderman's titles and dignities. The host had added his usual share of exaggeration, so that by the time the alderman drove up to the door he was a milor — magnifico — principe — the Lord knows what!

The alderman was advised to take an escort to Fondi[1] and Itri,[2] but he refused. It was as much as a man's life was worth, he said, to stop him on the king's highway; he would complain of it to the ambassador at Naples; he would make a national affair of it. The Principessa Popkins, a fresh, motherly dame, seemed perfectly secure in the protection of her husband, so omnipotent a man in the city. The Signorines Popkins, two fine, bouncing girls, looked to their brother Tom, who had taken lessons in boxing; and as to the dandy himself, he swore no scaramouch[3] of an Italian robber would dare to meddle with an Englishman. The landlord shrugged his shoulders, and turned out the palms of his hands with a true Italian grimace, and the carriage of Milor Popkins rolled on.

They passed through several very suspicious places without any molestation. The Misses Popkins, who were very romantic, and had learned to draw in water colors, were enchanted with the savage scenery around; it was so like what they had read in

[1] See Note 6, p. 247.

[2] A picturesque town of Italy, on a lofty hill surmounted by a ruined castle.

[3] A boastful person.

Mrs. Radcliffe's romances;[1] they should like of all things to make sketches. At length the carriage arrived at a place where the road wound up a long hill. Mrs. Popkins had sunk into a sleep; the young ladies were lost in the "Loves of the Angels,"[2] and the dandy was hectoring the postilions from the coach box. The alderman got out, as he said, to stretch his legs up the hill. It was a long, winding ascent, and obliged him every now and then to stop and blow, and wipe his forehead, with many a "pish!" and "whew!" being rather pursy and short of wind. As the carriage, however, was far behind him, and moved slowly under the weight of so many well-stuffed trunks and well-stuffed travelers, he had plenty of time to walk at leisure.

On a jutting point of a rock that overhung the road, nearly at the summit of the hill, just where the road began again to descend, he saw a solitary man seated, who appeared to be tending goats. Alderman Popkins was one of your shrewd travelers who always like to be picking up small information along the road; so he thought he'd just scramble up to the honest man and have a little talk with him, by way of learning the news and getting a lesson in Italian. As he drew near to the peasant, he did not half like his looks. He was partly reclining on the rocks, wrapped in the usual long mantle, which, with his slouched hat, only left a part of a swarthy visage, with a keen black eye, a beetle brow, and a fierce mustache, to be seen. He had whistled several times to his dog, which was roving about the side of the hill. As the alderman approached, he arose and greeted him. When standing erect, he seemed almost gigantic, at least in the eyes of Alderman Popkins, who, however, being a short man, might be deceived.

The latter would gladly now have been back in the carriage, or even on 'Change in London, for he was by no means well

[1] Anne Radcliffe (1764–1823), English novelist, author of Udolpho, and Romance of the Forest. The terrible, somber, mysterious, and marvelous predominate in her works.

[2] A poem by Thomas Moore (see Note 6, p. 131).

pleased with his company. However, he determined to put the best face on matters, and was beginning a conversation about the state of the weather, the baddishness of the crops, and the price of goats in that part of the country, when he heard a violent screaming. He ran to the edge of the rock, and looking over, beheld his carriage surrounded by robbers. One held down the fat footman, another had the dandy by his starched cravat, with a pistol to his head; one was rummaging a portmanteau, another rummaging the principessa's pockets; while the two Misses Popkins were screaming from each window of the carriage, and their waiting maid squalling from the dickey.

Alderman Popkins felt all the ire of the parent and the magistrate roused within him. He grasped his cane, and was on the point of scrambling down the rocks either to assault the robbers or to read the riot act, when he was suddenly seized by the arm. It was by his friend the goatherd, whose cloak falling open, discovered[1] a belt stuck full of pistols and stilettos. In short, he found himself in the clutches of the captain of the band, who had stationed himself on the rock to look out for travelers and to give notice to his men.

A sad ransacking took place. Trunks were turned inside out, and all the finery and frippery of the Popkins family scattered about the road. Such a chaos of Venice beads and Roman mosaics, and Paris bonnets of the young ladies, mingled with the alderman's nightcaps and lambs'-wool stockings, and the dandy's hairbrushes, stays, and starched cravats.

The gentlemen were eased of their purses and their watches, the ladies of their jewels, and the whole party were on the point of being carried up into the mountain when fortunately the appearance of soldiers at a distance obliged the robbers to make off with the spoils they had secured, and leave the Popkins family to gather together the remnants of their effects, and make the best of their way to Fondi.

When safe arrived, the alderman made a terrible blustering at

[1] Disclosed.

the inn, threatened to complain to the ambassador at Naples, and was ready to shake his cane at the whole country. The dandy had many stories to tell of his scuffles with the brigands, who overpowered him merely by numbers. As to the Misses Popkins, they were quite delighted with the adventure, and were occupied the whole evening in writing it in their journals. They declared the captain of the band to be a most romantic-looking man, they dared to say some unfortunate lover or exiled nobleman, and several of the band to be very handsome young men, "quite picturesque!"

"In verity," said mine host of Terracina, "they say the captain of the band is *un gallant homo*."

"A gallant man!" said the Englishman indignantly; "I'd have your gallant man hanged like a dog!"

"To dare to meddle with Englishmen!" said Mr. Hobbs.

"And such a family as the Popkinses!" said Mr. Dobbs.

"They ought to come upon the country for damages," said Mr. Hobbs.

"Our ambassador should make a complaint to the government of Naples," said Mr. Dobbs.

"They should be obliged to drive these rascals out of the country," said Hobbs.

"And if they did not, we should declare war against them," said Dobbs.

"Pish!—humbug!" muttered the Englishman to himself, and walked away.

The Englishman had been a little wearied by this story, and by the ultra zeal of his countrymen, and was glad when a summons to their supper relieved him from the crowd of travelers. He walked out with his Venetian friends and a young Frenchman of an interesting demeanor, who had become sociable with them in the course of the conversation. They directed their steps towards the sea, which was lit up by the rising moon.

As they strolled along the beach they came to where a party

of soldiers were stationed in a circle. They were guarding a number of galley slaves, who were permitted to refresh themselves in the evening breeze, and sport and roll upon the sand.

The Frenchman paused and pointed to the group of wretches at their sports. "It is difficult," said he, "to conceive a more frightful mass of crime than is here collected. Many of these have probably been robbers such as you have heard described. Such is, too often, the career of crime in this country. The parricide, the fratricide, the infanticide, the miscreant of every kind, first flies from justice and turns mountain bandit, and then, when wearied of a life of danger, becomes traitor to his brother desperadoes, betrays them to punishment, and thus buys a commutation of his own sentence from death to the galleys, happy in the privilege of wallowing on the shore an hour a day, in this mere state of animal enjoyment."

The fair Venetian shuddered as she cast a look at the horde of wretches at their evening amusement. "They seem," she said, "like so many serpents writhing together." And yet the idea that some of them had been robbers, those formidable beings that haunted her imagination, made her still cast another fearful glance, as we contemplate some terrible beast of prey with a degree of awe and horror, even though caged and chained.

The conversation reverted to the tales of banditti which they had heard at the inn. The Englishman condemned some of them as fabrications, others as exaggerations. As to the story of the improvisatore, he pronounced it a mere piece of romance, originating in the heated brain of the narrator.

"And yet," said the Frenchman, "there is so much romance about the real life of those beings, and about the singular country they infest, that it is hard to tell what to reject on the ground of improbability. I have had an adventure happen to myself which gave me an opportunity of getting some insight into their manners and habits, which I found altogether out of the common run of existence."

There was an air of mingled frankness and modesty about the Frenchman which had gained the good will of the whole party, not even excepting the Englishman. They all eagerly inquired after the particulars of the circumstances he alluded to, and as they strolled slowly up and down the seashore, he related the following adventure.

THE PAINTER'S ADVENTURE.

I AM an historical painter by profession, and resided for some time in the family of a foreign prince, at his villa about fifteen miles from Rome, among some of the most interesting scenery of Italy. It is situated on the heights of ancient Tusculum.[1] In its neighborhood are the ruins of the villas of Cicero, Sylla, Lucullus, Rufinus,[2] and other illustrious Romans, who sought refuge here occasionally from their toils, in the bosom of a soft and luxurious repose. From the midst of delightful bowers, refreshed by the pure mountain breeze, the eye looks over a romantic landscape full of poetical and historical associations. The Alban Mountains,[3] Tivoli, once the favorite residence of Horace[4] and

[1] See note on Frascati, p. 267.

[2] Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 B.C.) was an illustrious Roman orator, philosopher, and statesman; Lucius Cornelius Sulla or Sylla (138–78 B.C.) was a Roman general and statesman who became Dictator of Rome; Lucius Licinius Lucullus (110–58 or 57 B.C.) was a celebrated Roman general and consul; Rufinus (335–395) was an ambitious Roman courtier and statesman.

[3] Volcanic mountains in central Italy, near Rome. The highest peak, Monte Cavo (formerly Alban Mount), was the seat of the gods who watched over the destinies of Rome.

[4] The poet Horace had a great relish for rural pleasures, which he enjoyed in his famous villa in Tibur (now Tivoli), a town sixteen miles northeast of Rome. There are many different accounts of the founders and origin of this town.

Mæcenas;[1] the vast, deserted, melancholy Campagna,[2] with the Tiber[3] winding through it, and St. Peter's[4] dome swelling in the midst, the monument, as it were, over the grave of ancient Rome.

I assisted the prince in researches which he was making among the classic ruins of his vicinity. His exertions were highly successful. Many wrecks of admirable statues and fragments of exquisite sculpture were dug up, monuments of the taste and magnificence that reigned in the ancient Tusculan abodes. He had studded his villa and its grounds with statues, relievos,[5] vases, and sarcophagi,[6] thus retrieved from the bosom of the earth.

The mode of life pursued at the villa was delightfully serene, diversified by interesting occupations and elegant leisure. Every one passed the day according to his pleasure or pursuits, and we all assembled in a cheerful dinner party at sunset.

It was on the fourth of November, a beautiful, serene day, that we had assembled in the saloon at the sound of the first dinner bell. The family were surprised at the absence of the prince's confessor. They waited for him in vain, and at length placed themselves at table. They at first attributed his absence to his having prolonged his customary walk, and the early part of the dinner passed without any uneasiness. When the dessert was served, however, without his making his appearance, they began to feel anxious. They feared he might have been taken ill in some alley of the woods, or might have fallen into the hands of robbers. Not far from the villa, with the interval of a small valley, rose the mountains of the Abruzzi, the stronghold of banditti.

1 Caius Cilnius Mæcenas (70–8 B.C.) was a Roman statesman and patron of letters, whose name has been rendered famous by his liberal patronage of Horace, Virgil, and other poets.

2 See Note 2, p. 267.

3 A river in the central part of Italy.

4 St. Peter's Cathedral, the largest and most magnificent church in the world.

5 Figures in relief; that is, projecting above the plane on which they are formed.

6 Stone coffins.

Indeed, the neighborhood had for some time past been infested by them, and Barbone, a notorious bandit chief, had often been met prowling about the solitudes of Tusculum. The daring enterprises of these ruffians were well known; the objects of their cupidity or vengeance were insecure even in palaces. As yet they had respected the possessions of the prince, but the idea of such dangerous spirits hovering about the neighborhood was sufficient to occasion alarm.

The fears of the company increased as evening closed in. The prince ordered out forest guards and domestics with flambeaux to search for the confessor. They had not departed long when a slight noise was heard in the corridor of the ground floor. The family were dining on the first floor, and the remaining domestics were occupied in attendance. There was no one on the ground floor at this moment but the housekeeper, the laundress, and three field laborers who were resting themselves and conversing with the women.

I heard the noise from below, and presuming it to be occasioned by the return of the absentee, I left the table and hastened downstairs, eager to gain intelligence that might relieve the anxiety of the prince and princess. I had scarcely reached the last step when I beheld before me a man dressed as a bandit, a carbine in his hand, and a stiletto and pistols in his belt. His countenance had a mingled expression of ferocity and trepidation. He sprang upon me, and exclaimed exultingly, "*Ecco il principe!*"[1]

I saw at once into what hands I had fallen, but endeavored to summon up coolness and presence of mind. A glance towards the lower end of the corridor showed me several ruffians, clothed and armed in the same manner with the one who had seized me. They were guarding the two females and the field laborers. The robber who held me firmly by the collar, demanded repeatedly whether or not I were the prince; his object evidently was to carry off the prince and extort an immense ransom. He was en-

[1] Here is the prince.

raged at receiving none but vague replies, for I felt the importance of misleading him.

A sudden thought struck me how I might extricate myself from his clutches. I was unarmed, it is true, but I was vigorous. His companions were at a distance. By a sudden exertion I might wrest myself from him and spring up the staircase, whither he would not dare to follow me singly. The idea was put in practice as soon as conceived. The ruffian's throat was bare; with my right hand I seized him by it, with my left hand I grasped the arm which held the carbine. The suddenness of my attack took him completely unawares, and the strangling nature of my grasp paralyzed him. He choked and faltered. I felt his hand relaxing its hold, and was on the point of jerking myself away, and darting up the staircase before he could recover himself, when I was suddenly seized by some one from behind.

I had to let go my grasp. The bandit, once released, fell upon me with fury, and gave me several blows with the butt end of his carbine, one of which wounded me severely in the forehead and covered me with blood. He took advantage of my being stunned to rifle me of my watch and whatever valuables I had about my person.

When I recovered from the effect of the blow, I heard the voice of the chief of the banditti, who exclaimed, "*Quello e il principe; siamo contente; andiamo!*" ("It is the prince; enough; let us be off.") The band immediately closed around me and dragged me out of the palace, bearing off the three laborers likewise.

I had no hat on, and the blood flowed from my wound. I managed to stanch it, however, with my pocket handkerchief, which I bound round my forehead. The captain of the band conducted me in triumph, supposing me to be the prince. We had gone some distance before he learned his mistake from one of the laborers. His rage was terrible. It was too late to return to the villa and endeavor to retrieve his error, for by this time the alarm must have been given and every one in arms. He

darted at me a ferocious look, swore I had deceived him and caused him to miss his fortune, and told me to prepare for death. The rest of the robbers were equally furious. I saw their hands upon their poniards, and I knew that death was seldom an empty threat with these ruffians. The laborers saw the peril into which their information had betrayed me, and eagerly assured the captain that I was a man for whom the prince would pay a great ransom. This produced a pause. For my part, I cannot say that I had been much dismayed by their menaces. I mean not to make any boast of courage, but I have been so schooled to hardship during the late revolutions, and have beheld death around me in so many perilous and disastrous scenes, that I have become in some measure callous to its terrors. The frequent hazard of life makes a man at length as reckless of it as a gambler of his money. To their threat of death I replied that the sooner it was executed the better. This reply seemed to astonish the captain, and the prospect of ransom held out by the laborers had, no doubt, a still greater effect on him. He considered for a moment, assumed a calmer manner, and made a sign to his companions, who had remained waiting for my death warrant. "Forward!" said he; "we will see about this matter by and by!"

We descended rapidly towards the road of La Molara,[1] which leads to Rocca Priore. In the midst of this road is a solitary inn. The captain ordered the troop to halt at the distance of a pistol shot from it, and enjoined profound silence. He approached the threshold alone, with noiseless steps. He examined the outside of the door very narrowly, and then, returning precipitately, made a sign for the troop to continue its march in silence. It has since been ascertained that this was one of those infamous inns which are the secret resorts of banditti. The innkeeper had

[1] La Molara is an old castle on the Via Latina, a road which emerges from Rome and runs through a valley. It has lately been restored as far as Rocca Priore, a town on the summit of one of the Alban Hills, formerly known as Corbio.

an understanding with the captain, as he most probably had with the chiefs of the different bands. When any of the patrols and gendarmes were quartered at his house, the brigands were warned of it by a preconcerted signal on the door; when there was no such signal they might enter with safety, and be sure of welcome.

After pursuing our road a little farther, we struck off towards the woody mountains which envelop Rocca Priore. Our march was long and painful, with many circuits and windings; at length we clambered a steep ascent covered with a thick forest, and when we had reached the center I was told to seat myself on the ground. No sooner had I done so than, at a sign from their chief, the robbers surrounded me, and spreading their great cloaks from one to the other, formed a kind of pavilion of mantles, to which their bodies might be said to serve as columns. The captain then struck a light, and a flambeau was lit immediately. The mantles were extended to prevent the light of the flambeau from being seen through the forest. Anxious as was my situation I could not look round upon this screen of dusky drapery, relieved by the bright colors of the robbers' garments, the gleaming of their weapons, and the variety of strong, marked countenances, lit up by the flambeau, without admiring the picturesque effect of the scene. It was quite theatrical.

The captain now held an inkhorn, and giving me pen and paper, ordered me to write what he should dictate. I obeyed. It was a demand, couched in the style of robber eloquence, that the prince should send three thousand dollars for my ransom, or that my death should be the consequence of a refusal.

I knew enough of the desperate character of these beings to feel assured this was not an idle menace. Their only mode of insuring attention to their demands is to make the infliction of the penalty inevitable. I saw at once, however, that the demand was preposterous and made in improper language.

I told the captain so, and assured him that so extravagant a sum would never be granted; that I was neither a friend nor

relative of the prince, but a mere artist, employed to execute certain paintings; that I had nothing to offer as a ransom but the price of my labors; if this were not sufficient, my life was at their disposal; it was a thing on which I set but little value.

I was the more hardy in my reply because I saw that coolness and hardihood had an effect upon the robbers. It is true, as I finished speaking, the captain laid his hand upon his stiletto; but he restrained himself, and snatching the letter, folded it, and ordered me, in a peremptory tone, to address it to the prince. He then dispatched one of the laborers with it to Tusculum, who promised to return with all possible speed.

The robbers now prepared themselves for sleep, and I was told that I might do the same. They spread their great cloaks on the ground, and lay down around me. One was stationed at a little distance to keep watch, and was relieved every two hours. The strangeness and wildness of this mountain bivouac among lawless beings whose hands seemed ever ready to grasp the stiletto, and with whom life was so trivial and insecure, was enough to banish repose. The coldness of the earth and of the dew, however, had a still greater effect than mental causes in disturbing my rest. The airs wafted to these mountains from the distant Mediterranean diffused a great chilliness as the night advanced. An expedient suggested itself. I called one of my fellow prisoners, the laborers, and made him lie down beside me. Whenever one of my limbs became chilled, I approached it to the robust limb of my neighbor, and borrowed some of his warmth. In this way I was able to obtain a little sleep.

Day at length dawned, and I was roused from my slumber by the voice of the chieftain. He desired me to rise and follow him. I obeyed. On considering his physiognomy attentively, it appeared a little softened. He even assisted me in scrambling up the steep forest, among rocks and brambles. Habit had made him a vigorous mountaineer, but I found it excessively toilsome to climb these rugged heights. We arrived at length at the summit of the mountain.

Here it was that I felt all the enthusiasm of my art suddenly awakened, and I forgot in an instant all my perils and fatigues, at this magnificent view of the sunrise in the midst of the mountains of the Abruzzi. It was on these heights that Hannibal[1] first pitched his camp and pointed out Rome to his followers. The eye embraces a vast extent of country. The minor height of Tusculum, with its villas and its sacred ruins, lies below; the Sabine Hills[2] and the Albanian Mountains stretch on either hand; and beyond Tusculum and Frascati spreads out the immense Campagna, with its lines of tombs, and here and there a broken aqueduct stretching across it, and the towers and domes of the Eternal City[3] in the midst.

Fancy this scene lit up by the glories of a rising sun, and bursting upon my sight as I looked forth from among the majestic forests of the Abruzzi. Fancy, too, the savage foreground, made still more savage by groups of banditti, armed and dressed in their wild, picturesque manner, and you will not wonder that the enthusiasm of a painter for a moment overpowered all his other feelings.

The banditti were astonished at my admiration of a scene which familiarity had made so common in their eyes. I took advantage of their halting at this spot, drew forth a quire of drawing paper, and began to sketch the features of the landscape. The height on which I was seated was wild and solitary, separated from the ridge of Tusculum by a valley nearly three miles wide, though the distance appeared less from the purity of the atmosphere. This height was one of the favorite retreats of the banditti, commanding a lookout over the country, while at the same time it was covered with forests, and distant from the populous haunts of men.

While I was sketching, my attention was called off for a moment by the cries of birds and the bleatings of sheep. I looked around, but could see nothing of the animals which uttered them. They were repeated, and appeared to come from the summits of the trees. On looking more narrowly, I perceived six of the rob-

[1] See Note 2, p. 261. [2] A range in central Italy, near Rome.
[3] Rome is called the "Eternal City."

bers perched in the tops of oaks which grew on the breezy crest of the mountain, and commanded an uninterrupted prospect. They were keeping a lookout like so many vultures, casting their eyes into the depths of the valley below us, communicating with each other by signs, or holding discourse in sounds which might be mistaken by the wayfarer for the cries of hawks and crows, or the bleating of the mountain flocks. After they had reconnoitered the neighborhood, and finished their singular discourse, they descended from their airy perch and returned to their prisoners. The captain posted three of them at three naked sides of the mountain, while he remained to guard us with what appeared his most trusty companion.

I had my book of sketches in my hand. He requested to see it, and after having run his eye over it expressed himself convinced of the truth of my assertion that I was a painter. I thought I saw a gleam of good feeling dawning in him, and determined to avail myself of it. I knew that the worst of men have their good points and their accessible sides, if one would but study them carefully. Indeed, there is a singular mixture in the character of the Italian robber. With reckless ferocity he often mingles traits of kindness and good humor. He is not always radically bad, but driven to his course of life by some unpremeditated crime, the effect of those sudden bursts of passion to which the Italian temperament is prone. This has compelled him to take to the mountains, or, as it is technically termed among them, *andare in campagna.*[1] He has become a robber by profession, but, like a soldier, when not in action he can lay aside his weapon and his fierceness and become like other men.

I took occasion, from the observations of the captain on my sketchings, to fall into conversation with him, and found him sociable and communicative. By degrees I became completely at my ease with him. I had fancied I perceived about him a degree of self-love, which I determined to make use of. I assumed an air of careless frankness, and told him that, as an art-

[1] To go into the country.

ist, I pretended to the power of judging of the physiognomy; that I thought I perceived something in his features and demeanor which announced him worthy of higher fortunes; that he was not formed to exercise the profession to which he had abandoned himself; that he had talents and qualities fitted for a nobler sphere of action; that he had but to change his course of life and, in a legitimate career, the same courage and endowments which now made him an object of terror would assure him the applause and admiration of society.

I had not mistaken my man; my discourse both touched and excited him. He seized my hand, pressed it, and replied with strong emotion, "You have guessed the truth; you have judged of me rightly." He remained for a moment silent, then, with a kind of effort, he resumed, "I will tell you some particulars of my life, and you will perceive that it was the oppression of others, rather than my own crimes, which drove me to the mountains. I sought to serve my fellow-men, and they have persecuted me from among them." We seated ourselves on the grass, and the robber gave me the following anecdotes of his history.

THE STORY OF THE BANDIT CHIEFTAIN.

I AM a native of the village of Prossedi.[1] My father was easy enough in circumstances, and we lived peaceably and independently, cultivating our fields. All went on well with us until a new chief of the sbirri[2] was sent to our village to take command of the police. He was an arbitrary fellow, prying into everything, and practicing all sorts of vexations and oppressions

[1] A town in Italy, six miles from San Lorenzo, which is notorious as the headquarters of the most daring brigands that have in modern times infested the road from Rome to Naples.

[2] Constables.

in the discharge of his office. I was at that time eighteen years of age, and had a natural love of justice and good neighborhood. I had also a little education, and knew something of history, so as to be able to judge a little of men and their actions. All this inspired me with hatred for this paltry despot. My own family, also, became the object of his suspicion or dislike, and felt more than once the arbitrary abuse of his power. These things worked together in my mind, and I gasped after vengeance. My character was always ardent and energetic, and, acted upon by the love of justice, determined me, by one blow, to rid the country of the tyrant.

Full of my project, I rose one morning before peep of day, and, concealing a stiletto under my waistcoat — here you see it! (and he drew forth a long, keen poniard) — I lay in wait for him in the outskirts of the village. I knew all his haunts, and his habit of making his rounds and prowling about like a wolf in the gray of the morning.[1] At length I met him, and attacked him with fury. He was armed, but I took him unawares, and was full of youth and vigor. I gave him repeated blows to make sure work, and laid him lifeless at my feet.

When I was satisfied that I had done for him,[2] I returned with all haste to the village, but had the ill luck to meet two of the sbirri as I entered it. They accosted me, and asked if I had seen their chief. I assumed an air of tranquillity, and told them I had not. They continued on their way, and within a few hours brought back the dead body to Prossedi. Their suspicions of me being already awakened, I was arrested and thrown into prison. Here I lay several weeks, when the prince, who was seigneur[3] of Prossedi, directed judicial proceedings against me. I was brought to trial, and a witness was produced who pretended to have seen me flying with precipitation not far from the bleeding body, and so I was condemned to the galleys for thirty years.

[1] "In the gray of the morning," i.e., at dawn.

[2] "Had done for him," i.e., had killed him.

[3] Lord.

"Curse on such laws!" vociferated the bandit, foaming with rage. "Curse on such a government! and ten thousand curses on the prince who caused me to be adjudged so rigorously, while so many other Roman princes harbor and protect assassins a thousand times more culpable! What had I done but what was inspired by a love of justice and my country? Why was my act more culpable than that of Brutus, when he sacrificed Cæsar[1] to the cause of liberty and justice?"

There was something at once both lofty and ludicrous in the rhapsody of this robber chief, thus associating himself with one of the great names of antiquity. It showed, however, that he had at least the merit of knowing the remarkable facts in the history of his country. He became more calm, and resumed his narrative.

I was conducted to Civita Vecchia[2] in fetters. My heart was burning with rage. I had been married scarce six months to a woman whom I passionately loved, and who was pregnant. My family was in despair. For a long time I made unsuccessful efforts to break my chain. At length I found a morsel of iron, which I hid carefully, and endeavored with a pointed flint to fashion it into a kind of file. I occupied myself in this work during the night time, and when it was finished I made out, after a long time, to sever one of the rings of my chain. My flight was successful.

I wandered for several weeks in the mountains which surround

[1] Julius Cæsar (100–44 B.C.), the great Roman general, statesman, and orator, was one of the most remarkable men that ever lived. He became undisputed master of the known world, and was made imperator for life. He was publicly offered a regal crown, which he refused. He was assassinated by a number of conspirators, among whom was Marcus Junius Brutus (85–42 B.C.), a noted Roman, who had been treated with great kindness by Cæsar, and was for a time greatly attached to him, but who was induced to join the conspiracy.

[2] A seaport on the Mediterranean, thirty-eight miles from Rome. It contains a prison.

Prossedi, and found means to inform my wife of the place where I was concealed. She came often to see me. I had determined to put myself at the head of an armed band. She endeavored, for a long time, to dissuade me, but finding my resolution fixed, she at length united in my project of vengeance, and brought me, herself, my poniard. By her means I communicated with several brave fellows of the neighboring villages, whom I knew to be ready to take to the mountains, and only panting for an opportunity to exercise their daring spirits. We soon formed a combination, procured arms, and we have had ample opportunities of revenging ourselves for the wrongs and injuries which most of us have suffered. Everything has succeeded with us until now, and had it not been for our blunder in mistaking you for the prince, our fortunes would have been made.

Here the robber concluded his story. He had talked himself into complete companionship, and assured me he no longer bore me any grudge for the error of which I had been the innocent cause. He even professed a kindness for me, and wished me to remain some time with them. He promised to give me a sight of certain grottoes which they occupied beyond Velletri,[1] and whither they resorted during the intervals of their expeditions.

He assured me that they led a jovial life there, had plenty of good cheer, slept on beds of moss, and were waited upon by young and beautiful females, whom I might take for models.

I confess I felt my curiosity roused by his descriptions of the grottoes and their inhabitants; they realized those scenes in robber story which I had always looked upon as mere creations of the fancy. I should gladly have accepted his invitation and paid a visit to these caverns could I have felt more secure in my company.

I began to find my situation less painful. I had evidently propitiated the good will of the chieftain, and hoped that he

[1] A town in southern Italy, a favorite excursion place for tourists. Its environs are very beautiful.

might release me for a moderate ransom. A new alarm, however, awaited me. While the captain was looking out with impatience for the return of the messenger who had been sent to the prince, the sentinel posted on the side of the mountain facing the plain of La Molara, came running towards us. "We are betrayed!" exclaimed he. "The police of Frascati are after us. A party of carabineers[1] have just stopped at the inn below the mountain." Then, laying his hand on his stiletto, he swore, with a terrible oath, that if they made the least movement towards the mountain, my life and the lives of my fellow prisoners should answer for it.

The chieftain resumed all his ferocity of demeanor, and approved of what his companion said; but when the latter had returned to his post he turned to me with a softened air: "I must act as chief," said he, "and humor my dangerous subalterns. It is a law with us to kill our prisoners rather than suffer them to be rescued; but do not be alarmed. In case we are surprised, keep by me; fly with us, and I will consider myself responsible for your life."

There was nothing very consolatory in this arrangement, which would have placed me between two dangers. I scarcely knew, in case of flight, from which I should have the most to apprehend, the carbines of the pursuers or the stilettos of the pursued. I remained silent, however, and endeavored to maintain a look of tranquillity.

For an hour was I kept in this state of peril and anxiety. The robbers, crouching among their leafy coverts, kept an eagle watch upon the carabineers below, as they loitered about the inn, sometimes lolling about the portal, sometimes disappearing for several minutes, then sallying out, examining their weapons, pointing in different directions, and apparently asking questions about the neighborhood. Not a movement, a gesture, was lost upon the keen eyes of the brigands. At length we were relieved from our

[1] Carabineers or carbineers are soldiers armed with short, light muskets, called carbines.

apprehensions. The carabineers, having finished their refreshment, seized their arms, continued along the valley towards the great road, and gradually left the mountain behind them. "I felt almost certain," said the chief, "that they could not be sent after us. They know too well how prisoners have fared in our hands on similar occasions. Our laws in this respect are inflexible, and are necessary for our safety. If we once flinched from them, there would no longer be such a thing as a ransom to be procured."

There were no signs yet of the messenger's return. I was preparing to resume my sketching when the captain drew a quire of paper from his knapsack. "Come," said he, laughing, "you are a painter; take my likeness. The leaves of your portfolio are small; draw it on this." I gladly consented, for it was a study that seldom presents itself to a painter. I recollected that Salvator Rosa[1] in his youth had voluntarily sojourned for a time among the banditti of Calabria,[2] and had filled his mind with the savage scenery and savage associates by which he was surrounded. I seized my pencil with enthusiasm at the thought. I found the captain the most docile of subjects, and, after various shiftings of position, placed him in an attitude to my mind.

Picture to yourself a stern, muscular figure, in fanciful bandit costume, with pistols and poniard in belt; his brawny neck bare, a handkerchief loosely thrown around it, and the two ends in front strung with rings of all kinds, the spoils of travelers; relics and medals hanging on his breast; his hat decorated with various colored ribbons; his vest and short breeches of bright colors, and finely embroidered; his legs in buskins or leggins. Fancy him on a mountain height, among wild rocks and rugged oaks, leaning on his carbine, as if meditating some exploit, while far below are beheld villages and villas, the scenes of his maraudings, with the wide Campagna dimly extending in the distance.

[1] See Note 1, p. 78.

[2] A division of Italy, forming the southwestern extremity of the peninsula.

The robber was pleased with the sketch, and seemed to admire himself upon paper. I had scarcely finished when the laborer arrived who had been sent for my ransom. He had reached Tusculum two hours after midnight. He had brought me a letter from the prince, who was in bed at the time of his arrival. As I had predicted, he treated the demand as extravagant, but offered five hundred dollars for my ransom. Having no money by him at the moment, he had sent a note for the amount, payable to whomsoever should conduct me safe and sound to Rome. I presented the note of hand to the chieftain. He received it with a shrug: "Oh, what use are notes of hand to us?" said he. "Who can we send with you to Rome to receive it? We are all marked men, known and described at every gate and military post and village church door. No, we must have gold and silver; let the sum be paid in cash, and you shall be restored to liberty."

The captain again placed a sheet of paper before me to communicate his determination to the prince. When I had finished the letter, and took the sheet from the quire, I found on the opposite side of it the portrait which I had just been tracing. I was about to tear it off and give it to the chief.

"Hold!" said he, "let it go to Rome; let them see what kind of a looking fellow I am. Perhaps the prince and his friends may form as good an opinion of me from my face as you have done."

This was said sportively, yet it was evident there was vanity lurking at the bottom. Even this wary, distrustful chief of banditti forgot for a moment his usual foresight and precaution, in the common wish to be admired. He never reflected what use might be made of this portrait in his pursuit and conviction.

The letter was folded and directed, and the messenger departed again for Tusculum. It was now eleven o'clock in the morning, and as yet we had eaten nothing. In spite of all my anxiety I began to feel a craving appetite. I was glad, therefore, to hear the captain talk something about eating. He observed that for three days and nights they had been lurking about among rocks

and woods, meditating their expedition to Tusculum, during which time all their provisions had been exhausted. He should now take measures to procure a supply. Leaving me, therefore, in charge of his comrade, in whom he appeared to have implicit confidence, he departed, assuring me that in less than two hours I should make a good dinner. Where it was to come from was an enigma to me, though it was evident these beings had their secret friends and agents throughout the country.

Indeed the inhabitants of these mountains, and of the valleys which they embosom, are a rude, half-civilized set. The towns and villages among the forests of the Abruzzi, shut up from the rest of the world, are almost like savage dens. It is wonderful that such rude abodes, so little known and visited, should be embosomed in the midst of one of the most traveled and civilized countries of Europe. Among these regions the robber prowls unmolested; not a mountaineer hesitates to give him secret harbor and assistance. The shepherds, however, who tend their flocks among the mountains, are the favorite emissaries of the robbers when they would send messages down to the valleys either for ransom or supplies.

The shepherds of the Abruzzi are as wild as the scenes they frequent. They are clad in a rude garb of black or brown sheepskin; they have high conical hats, and coarse sandals of cloth bound around their legs with thongs, similar to those worn by the robbers. They carry long staves, on which, as they lean, they form picturesque objects in the lonely landscape, and they are followed by their ever constant companion, the dog. They are a curious, questioning set, glad at any time to relieve the monotony of their solitude by the conversation of the passer-by, and the dog will lend an attentive ear, and put on as sagacious and inquisitive a look as his master.

But I am wandering from my story. I was now left alone with one of the robbers, the confidential companion of the chief. He was the youngest and most vigorous of the band, and though his countenance had something of that dissolute fierceness which

seems natural to this desperate, lawless mode of life, yet there were traces of manly beauty about it. As an artist I could not but admire it. I had remarked in him an air of abstraction and reverie, and at times a movement of inward suffering and impatience. He now sat on the ground, his elbows on his knees, his head resting between his clenched fists, and his eyes fixed on the earth with an expression of sadness and bitter rumination. I had grown familiar with him from repeated conversations, and had found him superior in mind to the rest of the band. I was anxious to seize any opportunity of sounding the feelings of these singular beings. I fancied I read in the countenance of this one traces of self-condemnation and remorse; and the ease with which I had drawn forth the confidence of the chieftain encouraged me to hope the same with his follower.

After a little preliminary conversation, I ventured to ask him if he did not feel regret at having abandoned his family and taken to this dangerous profession. "I feel," replied he, "but one regret, and that will end only with my life."

As he said this he pressed his clenched fists upon his bosom, drew his breath through his set teeth, and added, with a deep emotion, "I have something within here that stifles me; it is like a burning iron consuming my very heart. I could tell you a miserable story — but not now, another time."

He relapsed into his former position, and sat with his head between his hands, muttering to himself in broken ejaculations and what appeared at times to be curses and maledictions. I saw he was not in a mood to be disturbed, so I left him to himself. In a little while the exhaustion of his feelings, and probably the fatigues he had undergone in this expedition, began to produce drowsiness. He struggled with it for a time, but the warmth and stillness of midday made it irresistible, and he at length stretched himself upon the herbage and fell asleep.

I now beheld a chance of escape within my reach. My guard lay before me at my mercy — his vigorous limbs relaxed by sleep, his bosom open for the blow, his carbine slipped from his

nerveless grasp and lying by his side, his stiletto half out of the pocket in which it was usually carried. Two only of his comrades were in sight, and those at a considerable distance on the edge of the mountain, their backs turned to us, and their attention occupied in keeping a lookout upon the plain. Through a strip of intervening forest, and at the foot of a steep descent, I beheld the village of Rocca Priore. To have secured the carbine of the sleeping brigand, to have seized upon his poniard, and have plunged it in his heart, would have been the work of an instant. Should he die without noise, I might dart through the forest and down to Rocca Priore before my flight might be discovered. In case of alarm I should still have a fair start of the robbers, and a chance of getting beyond the reach of their shot.

Here, then, was an opportunity for both escape and vengeance, perilous, indeed, but powerfully tempting. Had my situation been more critical I could not have resisted it. I reflected, however, for a moment. The attempt, if successful, would be followed by the sacrifice of my two fellow prisoners, who were sleeping profoundly and could not be awakened in time to escape. The laborer who had gone after the ransom might also fall a victim to the rage of the robbers, without the money which he brought being saved. Besides, the conduct of the chief towards me made me feel confident of speedy deliverance. These reflections overcame the first powerful impulse, and I calmed the turbulent agitation which it had awakened.

I again took out my materials for drawing, and amused myself with sketching the magnificent prospect. It was now about noon, and everything had sunk into repose, like the sleeping bandit before me. The noontide stillness that reigned over these mountains, the vast landscape below, gleaming with distant towns and dotted with various habitations and signs of life, yet all so silent, had a powerful effect upon my mind. The intermediate valleys, too, which lie among the mountains, have a peculiar air of solitude. Few sounds are heard at midday to break the quiet

of the scene. Sometimes the whistle of a solitary muleteer, lagging with his lazy animal along the road which winds through the center of the valley; sometimes the faint piping of a shepherd's reed from the side of the mountain; or sometimes the bell of an ass slowly pacing along, followed by a monk with bare feet and bare, shining head, and carrying provisions to his convent.

I had continued to sketch for some time among my sleeping companions when at length I saw the captain of the band approaching, followed by a peasant leading a mule, on which was a well-filled sack. I at first apprehended that this was some new prey fallen into the hands of the robber; but the contented look of the peasant soon relieved me, and I was rejoiced to hear that it was our promised repast. The brigands now came running from the three sides of the mountain, having the quick scent of vultures. Every one busied himself in unloading the mule and relieving the sack of its contents.

The first thing that made its appearance was an enormous ham, of a color and plumpness that would have inspired the pencil of Teniers;[1] it was followed by a large cheese, a bag of boiled chestnuts, a little barrel of wine, and a quantity of good household bread. Everything was arranged on the grass with a degree of symmetry, and the captain, presenting me with his knife, requested me to help myself. We all seated ourselves around the viands, and nothing was heard for a time but the sound of vigorous mastication or the gurgling of the barrel of wine as it revolved briskly about the circle. My long fasting, and mountain air and exercise, had given me a keen appetite; and never did repast appear to me more excellent or picturesque.

From time to time one of the band was dispatched to keep a lookout upon the plain. No enemy was at hand, and the dinner was undisturbed. The peasant received nearly three times the value of his provisions, and set off down the mountain highly satisfied with his bargain. I felt invigorated by the hearty meal

1 David Teniers the Younger (1610–90), a celebrated Flemish painter, who excelled in tavern scenes and pictures of low life.

I had made, and notwithstanding that the wound I had received the evening before was painful, yet I could not but feel extremely interested and gratified by the singular scenes continually presented to me. Everything was picturesque about these wild beings and their haunts. Their bivouacs, their groups on guard, their indolent noontide repose on the mountain brow, their rude repast on the herbage among rocks and trees, — everything presented a study for a painter; but it was towards the approach of evening that I felt the highest enthusiasm awakened.

The setting sun, declining beyond the vast Campagna, shed its rich yellow beams on the woody summit of the Abruzzi. Several mountains crowned with snow shone brilliantly in the distance, contrasting their brightness with others, which, thrown into shade, assumed deep tints of purple and violet. As the evening advanced the landscape darkened into a sterner character. The immense solitude around, the wild mountains broken into rocks and precipices, intermingled with vast oaks, corks, and chestnuts, and the groups of banditti in the foreground, reminded me of the savage scenes of Salvator Rosa.

To beguile the time the captain proposed to his comrades to spread before me their jewels and cameos, as I must doubtless be a judge of such articles, and able to form an estimate of their value. He set the example, the others followed it, and in a few moments I saw the grass before me sparkling with jewels and gems that would have delighted the eyes of an antiquary or a fine lady.

Among them were several precious jewels and antique intaglios and cameos of great value, the spoils, doubtless, of travelers of distinction. I found that they were in the habit of selling their booty in the frontier towns; but as these, in general, were thinly and poorly peopled, and little frequented by travelers, they could offer no market for such valuable articles of taste and luxury. I suggested to them the certainty of their readily obtaining great prices for these gems among the rich strangers with whom Rome was thronged,

The impression made upon their greedy minds was immediately apparent. One of the band, a young man and the least known, requested permission of the captain to depart the following day, in disguise, for Rome, for the purpose of traffic, promising, on the faith of a bandit (a sacred pledge among them), to return in two days to any place that he might appoint. The captain consented, and a curious scene took place; the robbers crowded around him eagerly, confiding to him such of their jewels as they wished to dispose of, and giving him instructions what to demand. There was much bargaining and exchanging and selling of trinkets among them, and I beheld my watch, which had a chain and valuable seals, purchased by the young robber merchant of the ruffian who had plundered me, for sixty dollars. I now conceived a faint hope that if it went to Rome I might somehow or other regain possession of it.[1]

In the mean time day declined, and no messenger returned from Tusculum. The idea of passing another night in the woods was extremely disheartening, for I began to be satisfied with what I had seen of robber life. The chieftain now ordered his men to follow him, that he might station them at their posts, adding that if the messenger did not return before night they must shift their quarters to some other place.

I was again left alone with the young bandit who had before guarded me; he had the same gloomy air and haggard eye, with now and then a bitter, sardonic smile. I determined to probe this ulcerated heart, and reminded him of a kind promise he had given me to tell me the cause of his suffering. It seemed to me as if these troubled spirits were glad of any opportunity to disburden themselves, and of having some fresh, undiseased mind with which they could communicate. I had hardly made the request

[1] The hopes of the artist were not disappointed; the robber was stopped at one of the gates of Rome. Something in his looks or deportment had excited suspicion. He was searched, and the valuable trinkets found on him sufficiently evinced his character. On applying to the police the artist's watch was returned to him.

when he seated himself by my side, and gave me his story in, as near as I can recollect, the following words.

THE STORY OF THE YOUNG ROBBER.

I WAS born in the little town of Frosinone,[1] which lies at the skirts of the Abruzzi. My father had made a little property in trade, and gave me some education, as he intended me for the Church; but I had kept gay company too much to relish the cowl, so I grew up a loiterer about the place. I was a heedless fellow, a little quarrelsome on occasion, but good-humored in the main, so I made my way very well for a time, until I fell in love. There lived in our town a surveyor, or land bailiff, of the prince, who had a young daughter, a beautiful girl of sixteen. She was looked upon as something better than the common run[2] of our townsfolk, and was kept almost entirely at home. I saw her occasionally, and became madly in love with her; she looked so fresh and tender, and so different from the sunburned females to whom I had been accustomed.

As my father kept me in money, I always dressed well, and took all opportunities of showing myself off to advantage in the eyes of the little beauty. I used to see her at church; and as I could play a little upon the guitar, I gave a tune sometimes under her window of an evening, and I tried to have interviews with her in her father's vineyard, not far from the town, where she sometimes walked. She was evidently pleased with me; but she was young and shy, and her father kept a strict eye upon her, and took alarm at my attentions, for he had a bad opinion of me, and looked for a better match for his daughter. I became furious at the difficulties thrown in my way, having been accus-

[1] A town of Italy on the stream Cosa, forty-eight miles from Rome.

[2] "Common run," i.e., ordinary people.

tomed always to easy success among the women, being considered one of the smartest young fellows of the place.

Her father brought home a suitor for her, — a rich farmer from a neighboring town. The wedding day was appointed, and preparations were making. I got sight of her at the window, and I thought she looked sadly at me. I determined the match should not take place, cost what it might. I met her intended bridegroom in the market place, and could not restrain the expression of my rage. A few hot words passed between us, when I drew my stiletto and stabbed him to the heart. I fled to a neighboring church for refuge, and obtained absolution, but I did not dare to venture from my asylum.

At that time our captain was forming his troop. He had known me from boyhood, and hearing of my situation, came to me in secret, and made such offers that I agreed to enroll myself among his followers. Indeed, I had more than once thought of taking to this mode of life, having known several brave fellows of the mountains, who used to spend their money freely among us youngsters of the town. I accordingly left my asylum late one night, repaired to the appointed place of meeting, took the oaths prescribed, and became one of the troop. We were for some time in a distant part of the mountains, and our wild, adventurous kind of life hit my fancy wonderfully, and diverted my thoughts. At length they returned with all their violence to the recollection of Rosetta. The solitude in which I often found myself gave me time to brood over her image, and, as I have kept watch at night over our sleeping camp in the mountains, my feelings have been aroused almost to a fever.

At length we shifted our ground, and determined to make a descent upon the road between Terracina and Naples. In the course of our expedition we passed a day or two in the woody mountains which rise above Frosinone. I cannot tell you how I felt when I looked down upon that place, and distinguished the residence of Rosetta. I determined to have an interview with her — but to what purpose? I could not expect that she

would quit her home, and accompany me in my hazardous life among the mountains. She had been brought up too tenderly for that. When I looked upon the women who were associated with some of our troop, I could not have borne the thoughts of her being their companion. All return to my former life was likewise hopeless, for a price was set upon my head. Still I determined to see her; the very hazard and fruitlessness of the thing made me furious to accomplish it.

About three weeks since, I persuaded our captain to draw down to the vicinity of Frosinone, suggesting the chance of entrapping some of its principal inhabitants, and compelling them to a ransom. We were lying in ambush towards evening, not far from the vineyard of Rosetta's father. I stole quietly from my companions, and drew near to reconnoiter the place of her frequent walks. How my heart beat when among the vines I beheld the gleaming of a white dress! I knew it must be Rosetta's, it being rare for any female of that place to dress in white. I advanced secretly and without noise, until, putting aside the vines, I stood suddenly before her. She uttered a piercing shriek, but I seized her in my arms, put my hand upon her mouth, and conjured her to be silent. I poured out all the frenzy of my passion, offered to renounce my mode of life, to put my fate in her hands, to fly where we might live in safety together. All that I could say or do would not pacify her. Instead of love, horror and affright seemed to have taken possession of her breast. She struggled partly from my grasp, and filled the air with her cries.

In an instant the captain and the rest of my companions were around us. I would have given anything at that moment had she been safe out of our hands, and in her father's house. It was too late. The captain pronounced her a prize, and ordered that she should be borne to the mountains. I represented to him that she was my prize, — that I had a previous claim to her; and I mentioned my former attachment. He sneered bitterly in reply, observed that brigands had no business with village intrigues, and that, according to the laws of the troop, all spoils of

the kind were determined by lot. Love and jealousy were raging in my heart, but I had to choose between obedience and death. I surrendered her to the captain, and we made for the mountains.

She was overcome by affright, and her steps were so feeble and faltering that it was necessary to support her. I could not endure the idea that my comrades should touch her, and assuming a forced tranquillity, begged she might be confided to me, as one to whom she was more accustomed. The captain regarded me for a moment with a searching look, but I bore it without flinching, and he consented. I took her in my arms; she was almost senseless. Her head rested on my shoulder; I felt her breath on my face, and it seemed to fan the flame which devoured me. O God! to have this glowing treasure in my arms, and yet to think it was not mine.

We arrived at the foot of the mountain. I ascended it with difficulty, particularly where the woods were thick, but I would not relinquish my delicious burden. I reflected, with rage, however, that I must soon do so. I felt tempted, the stiletto in my hand, to cut my way through them all, and bear her off in triumph. I scarcely conceived the idea before I saw its rashness; but my brain was fevered with the thought that any but myself should enjoy her charms. I endeavored to outstrip my companions by the quickness of my movements, and to get a little distance ahead, in case any favorable opportunity of escape should present. Vain effort! The voice of the captain suddenly ordered a halt. I trembled, but had to obey. The poor girl partly opened a languid eye, but was without strength or motion. I laid her upon the grass. The captain darted on me a terrible look of suspicion, and ordered me to scour the woods with my companions, in search of some shepherd who might be sent to her father to demand a ransom.

I saw at once the peril. To resist with violence was certain death. I spoke out then with a fervor inspired by my passion and by despair. I reminded the captain that I was the first to seize her; that she was my prize. His only reply was to cock

his carbine, and at the signal my comrades did the same. They laughed with cruelty at my impotent rage. What could I do? I felt the madness of resistance. I was menaced on all hands, and my companions obliged me to follow them.

Here the robber paused in his recital, overpowered by his emotions. Great drops of sweat stood on his forehead; he panted rather than breathed; his brawny bosom rose and fell like the waves of the troubled sea. When he had become a little calm, he continued his recital.

I was not long in finding a shepherd (said he). I ran with the rapidity of a deer. I had left my companions far behind, and I rejoined them before they had reached one half the distance I had made. I hurried them back to the place where we had left the captain. As we approached, I beheld him seated by the side of Rosetta.

It was with extreme difficulty, and by guiding her hand, that she was made to trace a few characters, requesting her father to send three hundred dollars as her ransom. The letter was dispatched by the shepherd. When he was gone the chief turned sternly to me. "You have set an example," said he, "of mutiny and self-will, which, if indulged, would be ruinous to the troop. Had I treated you as our laws require, this bullet would have been driven through your brain. But you are an old friend. I have borne patiently with your fury and your folly. I have even protected you from a foolish passion that would have unmanned you. As to this girl, the laws of our association must have their course."

Here the robber paused again, panting with fury, and it was some moments before he could resume his story.

Hell (said he) was raging in my heart. I beheld the impossibility of avenging myself, and I felt that, according to the articles in which we stood bound to one another, the captain was in the

right. I rushed with frenzy from the place; I threw myself upon the earth, tore up the grass with my hands, and beat my head and gnashed my teeth in agony and rage. When at length I returned, I beheld the wretched victim. An emotion of pity for a moment subdued my fiercer feelings. I bore her to the foot of a tree, and leaned her gently against it. I took my gourd, which was filled with wine, and applying it to her lips, endeavored to make her swallow a little. To what a condition was she reduced!—she whom I had once seen the pride of Frosinone, whom but a short time before I had beheld sporting in her father's vineyard, so fresh, and beautiful, and happy! Her teeth were clinched, her eyes fixed on the ground, her form without motion, and in a state of absolute insensibility. I hung over her in an agony of recollection at all that she had been, and of anguish at what I now beheld her. I darted around a look of horror at my companions, who seemed like so many fiends; and I felt a horror at being myself their accomplice.

The captain, always suspicious, saw, with his usual penetration, what was passing within me, and ordered me to go upon the ridge of the woods, to keep a lookout over the neighborhood, and await the return of the shepherd. I obeyed, of course, stifling the fury that raged within me, though I felt, for the moment, that he was my most deadly foe.

On my way, however, a ray of reflection came across my mind. I perceived that the captain was but following, with strictness, the terrible laws to which we had sworn fidelity; that the passion by which I had been blinded might, with justice, have been fatal to me, but for his forbearance; that he had penetrated my soul, and had taken precautions, by sending me out of the way, to prevent my committing any excess in my anger. From that instant I felt that I was capable of pardoning him.

Occupied with these thoughts, I arrived at the foot of the mountain. The country was solitary and secure, and in a short time I beheld the shepherd at a distance crossing the plain. I hastened to meet him. He had obtained nothing.

I knew that, according to the laws of our troop, her death was inevitable. Our oaths required it. I felt, nevertheless, that, not having been able to have her to myself, I could be her executioner!

The robber again paused with agitation. I sat musing upon his last frightful words, which proved to what excess the passions may be carried when escaped from all moral restraint. There was a horrible verity in this story that reminded me of some of the tragic fictions of Dante.[1]

We now come to a fatal moment (resumed the bandit). After the report of the shepherd, I returned with him, and the chieftain received from his lips the refusal of her father. At a signal which we all understood, we followed him to some distance from the victim. He there pronounced her sentence of death. Every one stood ready to execute his orders, but I interfered. I observed that there was something due to pity as well as to justice; that I was as ready as any one to approve the implacable law, which was to serve as a warning to all those who hesitated to pay the ransoms demanded for our prisoners; but that, though the sacrifice was proper, it ought to be made without cruelty. "The night is approaching," continued I; "she will soon be wrapped in sleep; let her then be dispatched. All I now claim on the score of former kindness is, let me strike the blow. I will do it as surely, though more tenderly, than another." Several raised their voices against my proposition, but the captain imposed silence on them. He told me I might conduct her into a thicket at some distance, and he relied upon my promise.

I hastened to seize upon my prey. There was a forlorn kind of triumph at having at length become her exclusive possessor. I bore her off into the thickness of the forest. She remained in the

[1] Dante Alighieri (1265–1321), one of the greatest of Italian poets, author of the Divina Commedia or Divine Comedy. This work consists of three parts,— the Inferno, the Purgatorio, and the Paradiso.

same state of insensibility or stupor. I was thankful that she did not recollect me, for had she once murmured my name, I should have been overcome. She slept at length in the arms of him who was to poniard her. Many were the conflicts I underwent before I could bring myself to strike the blow. But my heart had become sore by the recent conflicts it had undergone, and I dreaded lest, by procrastination, some other should become her executioner. When her repose had continued for some time, I separated myself gently from her that I might not disturb her sleep, and seizing suddenly my poniard, plunged it into her bosom. A painful and concentrated murmur, but without any convulsive movement, accompanied her last sigh. So perished this unfortunate.

He ceased to speak. I sat, horror-struck, covering my face with my hands, seeking, as it were, to hide from myself the frightful images he had presented to my mind. I was roused from this silence by the voice of the captain. "You sleep," said he, "and it is time to be off. Come, we must abandon this height, as night is setting in, and the messenger is not returned. I will post some one on the mountain edge to conduct him to the place where we shall pass the night."

This was no agreeable news to me. I was sick at heart with the dismal story I had heard. I was harassed and fatigued, and the sight of the banditti began to grow insupportable to me.

The captain assembled his comrades. We rapidly descended the forest, which we had mounted with so much difficulty in the morning, and soon arrived in what appeared to be a frequented road. The robbers proceeded with great caution, carrying their guns cocked, and looking on every side with wary and suspicious eyes. They were apprehensive of encountering the civic patrol. We left Rocca Priore behind us. There was a fountain near by, and as I was excessively thirsty, I begged permission to stop and drink. The captain himself went and brought me water in his hat. We pursued our route, when, at the extremity of an alley which crossed the road, I perceived a female on horseback, dressed

in white. She was alone. I recollected the fate of the poor girl in the story, and trembled for her safety.

One of the brigands saw her at the same instant, and plunging into the bushes, he ran precipitately in the direction towards her. Stopping on the border of the alley, he put one knee to the ground, presented his carbine ready to menace her or to shoot her horse if she attempted to fly, and in this way awaited her approach. I kept my eyes fixed on her with intense anxiety. I felt tempted to shout and warn her of her danger, though my own destruction would have been the consequence. It was awful to see this tiger crouching ready for a bound, and the poor innocent victim unconsciously near him. Nothing but a mere chance could save her. To my joy the chance turned in her favor. She seemed almost accidentally to take an opposite path, which led outside of the woods, where the robber dared not venture. To this casual deviation she owed her safety.

I could not imagine why the captain of the band had ventured to such a distance from the height on which he had placed the sentinel to watch the return of the messenger. He seemed himself anxious at the risk to which he exposed himself. His movements were rapid and uneasy. I could scarce keep pace with him. At length, after three hours of what might be termed a forced march, we mounted the extremity of the same woods the summit of which we had occupied during the day; and I learned with satisfaction that we had reached our quarters for the night. "You must be fatigued," said the chieftain; "but it was necessary to survey the environs so as not to be surprised during the night. Had we met with the famous civic guard of Rocca Priore, you would have seen fine sport." Such was the indefatigable precaution and forethought of this robber chief, who really gave continual evidence of military talent.

The night was magnificent. The moon, rising above the horizon in a cloudless sky, faintly lit up the grand features of the mountain, while lights twinkling here and there, like terrestrial stars in the wide, dusky expanse of the landscape, betrayed the

lonely cabins of the shepherds. Exhausted by fatigue and by the many agitations I had experienced, I prepared to sleep, soothed by the hope of approaching deliverance. The captain ordered his companions to collect some dry moss; he arranged with his own hands a kind of mattress and pillow of it, and gave me his ample mantle as a covering. I could not but feel both surprised and gratified by such unexpected attentions on the part of this benevolent cutthroat; for there is nothing more striking than to find the ordinary charities, which are matters of course in common life, flourishing by the side of such stern and sterile crime. It is like finding tender flowers and fresh herbage of the valley growing among the rocks and cinders of the volcano.

Before I fell asleep I had some further discourse with the captain, who seemed to feel great confidence in me. He referred to our previous conversation of the morning; told me he was weary of his hazardous profession; that he had acquired sufficient property, and was anxious to return to the world and lead a peaceful life in the bosom of his family. He wished to know whether it was not in my power to procure for him a passport to the United States of America. I applauded his good intentions, and promised to do everything in my power to promote its success. We then parted for the night. I stretched myself upon my couch of moss, which, after my fatigues, felt like a bed of down; and, sheltered by the robber's mantle from all humidity, I slept soundly, without waking, until the signal to arise.

It was nearly six o'clock, and the day was just dawning. As the place where we had passed the night was too much exposed, we moved up into the thickness of the woods. A fire was kindled. While there was any flame the mantles were again extended round it, but when nothing remained but glowing cinders they were lowered, and the robbers seated themselves in a circle.

The scene before me reminded me of some of those described by Homer.[1] There wanted only the victim on the coals, and

[1] The great blind epic poet of Greece, author of the Iliad and Odyssey. He is supposed to have flourished about 1000 B.C.

the sacred knife to cut off the succulent parts and distribute them around. My companions might have rivaled the grim warriors of Greece. In place of the noble repasts, however, of Achilles and Agamemnon,[1] I beheld displayed on the grass the remains of the ham which had sustained so vigorous an attack on the preceding evening, accompanied by the relics of the bread, cheese, and wine. We had scarcely commenced our frugal breakfast, when I heard again an imitation of the bleating of sheep, similar to what I had heard the day before. The captain answered it in the same tone. Two men were soon after seen descending from the woody height where we had passed the preceding evening. On nearer approach, they proved to be the sentinel and the messenger. The captain rose, and went to meet them. He made a signal for his comrades to join him. They had a short conference, and then returning to me with great eagerness, "Your ransom is paid," said he, "you are free!"

Though I had anticipated deliverance, I cannot tell you what a rush of delight these tidings gave me. I cared not to finish my repast, but prepared to depart. The captain took me by the hand, requested permission to write to me, and begged me not to forget the passport. I replied that I hoped to be of effectual service to him, and that I relied on his honor to return the prince's note for five hundred dollars, now that the cash was paid. He regarded me for a moment with surprise, then seeming to recollect himself, "*E giusto*," said he, "*eccolo—adio!*"[2] He delivered me the note, pressed my hand once more, and we separated. The laborers were permitted to follow me, and we resumed with joy our road towards Tusculum.

The Frenchman ceased to speak. The party continued, for a few moments, to pace the shore in silence. The story had made a deep impression, particularly on the Venetian lady. At

[1] Agamemnon, the brother of Menelaus, led the Greek forces during the Trojan War, but Achilles was the chief hero (see Note 2, p. 182).

[2] It is just; there it is—adieu!

that part which related to the young girl of Frosinone she was violently affected. Sobs broke from her; she clung closer to her husband; and as she looked up to him as if for protection, the moonbeams, shining on her beautifully fair countenance, showed it paler than usual, while tears glittered in her fine dark eyes.

"*Corragio, mia vita!*"[1] said he, as he gently and fondly tapped the white hand that lay upon his arm.

The party now returned to the inn, and separated for the night. The fair Venetian, though of the sweetest temperament, was half out of humor with the Englishman for a certain slowness of faith which he had evinced throughout the whole evening. She could not understand this dislike to "humbug," as he termed it, which held a kind of sway over him, and seemed to control his opinions and his very actions.

"I'll warrant," said she to her husband, as they retired for the night, "I'll warrant, with all his affected indifference, this Englishman's heart would quake at the very sight of a bandit."

Her husband gently, and good-humoredly, checked her.

"I have no patience with these Englishmen," said she, as she got into bed; "they are so cold and insensible!"

THE ADVENTURE OF THE ENGLISHMAN.

IN the morning all was bustle in the inn at Terracina. The procaccio had departed at daybreak on its route towards Rome, but the Englishman was yet to start, and the departure of an English equipage is always enough to keep an inn in a bustle. On this occasion there was more than usual stir, for the Englishman, having much property about him, and having been convinced of the real danger of the road, had applied to the police, and obtained, by dint of liberal pay, an escort of eight dragoons and twelve foot soldiers, as far as Fondi.

[1] Courage, my love!

Perhaps, too, there might have been a little ostentation at bottom, though, to say the truth, he had nothing of it in his manner. He moved about, taciturn and reserved as usual, among the gaping crowd; gave laconic orders to John, as he packed away the thousand and one indispensable conveniences of the night; double-loaded his pistols with great *sang froid*,[1] and deposited them in the pockets of the carriage, taking no notice of a pair of keen eyes gazing on him from among the herd of loitering idlers.

The fair Venetian now came up with a request, made in her dulcet tones, that he would permit their carriage to proceed under protection of his escort. The Englishman, who was busy loading another pair of pistols for his servant, and held the ramrod between his teeth, nodded assent, as a matter of course, but without lifting up his eyes. The fair Venetian was a little piqued at what she supposed indifference. "O Dio!"[2] ejaculated she softly as she retired. "*Quanto sono insensibili questi Inglesi.*"[3]

At length, off they set in gallant style,—the eight dragoons prancing in front, the twelve foot soldiers marching in rear, and the carriage moving slowly in the center, to enable the infantry to keep pace with them. They had proceeded but a few hundred yards when it was discovered that some indispensable article had been left behind. In fact, the Englishman's purse was missing, and John was dispatched to the inn to search for it. This occasioned a little delay, and the carriage of the Venetians drove slowly on. John came back out of breath and out of humor. The purse was not to be found. His master was irritated; he recollected the very place where it lay; he had not a doubt the Italian servant had pocketed it. John was again sent back. He returned once more without the purse, but with the landlord and the whole household at his heels. A thousand ejaculations and protestations, accompanied by all sorts of grimaces and contortions. No purse had been seen; his Excellenza must be mistaken.

[1] Coolness. [2] O God!
[3] How indifferent these Englishmen are!

No, his Excellenza was not mistaken! The purse lay on the marble table, under the mirror; a green purse, half full of gold and silver. Again a thousand grimaces and contortions, and vows by San Gennaro that no purse of the kind had been seen.

The Englishman became furious. The waiter had pocketed it; the landlord was a knave; the inn, a den of thieves; it was a vile country; he had been cheated and plundered from one end of it to the other; but he'd have satisfaction—he'd drive right off to the police.

He was on the point of ordering the postilions to turn back, when, on rising, he displaced the cushion of the carriage, and the purse of money fell chinking to the floor.

All the blood in his body seemed to rush into his face. "Curse the purse!" said he, as he snatched it up. He dashed a handful of money on the ground before the pale, cringing waiter. "There, be off!" cried he. "John, order the postilions to drive on."

About half an hour had been exhausted in this altercation. The Venetian carriage had loitered along, its passengers looking out from time to time, and expecting the escort every moment to follow. They had gradually turned an angle of the road that shut them out of sight. The little army was again in motion, and made a very picturesque appearance as it wound along at the bottom of the rocks, the morning sunshine beaming upon the weapons of the soldiers.

The Englishman lolled back in his carriage, vexed with himself at what had passed, and consequently out of humor with all the world. As this, however, is no uncommon case with gentlemen who travel for their pleasure, it is hardly worthy of remark. They had wound up from the coast among the hills, and came to a part of the road that admitted of some prospect ahead.

"I see nothing of the lady's carriage, sir," said John, leaning down from the coach box.

"Pish!" said the Englishman testily; "don't plague me about the lady's carriage. Must I be continually pestered with the

concerns of strangers?" John said not another word, for he understood his master's mood.

The road grew more wild and lonely; they were slowly proceeding on a foot pace up a hill; the dragoons were some distance ahead, and had just reached the summit of the hill, when they uttered an exclamation, or rather shout, and galloped forward. The Englishman was roused from his sulky reverie. He stretched his head from the carriage, which had attained the brow of the hill. Before him extended a long, hollow defile, commanded on one side by rugged, precipitous heights covered with bushes of scanty forest. At some distance he beheld the carriage of the Venetians overturned. A numerous gang of desperadoes were rifling it; the young man and his servant were overpowered, and partly stripped; and the lady was in the hands of two of the ruffians. The Englishman seized his pistols, sprang from the carriage, and called upon John to follow him.

In the mean time, as the dragoons came forward, the robbers, who were busy with the carriage, quitted their spoil, formed themselves in the middle of the road, and taking a deliberate aim, fired. One of the dragoons fell, another was wounded, and the whole were for a moment checked and thrown into confusion. The robbers loaded again in an instant. The dragoons discharged their carbines, but without apparent effect. They received another volley, which, though none fell, threw them again into confusion. The robbers were loading a second time when they saw the foot soldiers at hand. "*Scampa via!*"[1] was the word. They abandoned their prey and retreated up the rocks, the soldiers after them. They fought from cliff to cliff and bush to bush, the robbers turning every now and then to fire upon their pursuers; the soldiers scrambling after them, and discharging their muskets whenever they could get a chance. Sometimes a soldier or a robber was shot down, and came tumbling among the cliffs. The dragoons kept firing from below whenever a robber came in sight.

[1] Be off at once!

The Englishman had hastened to the scene of action, and the balls discharged at the dragoons had whistled past him as he advanced. One object, however, engrossed his attention. It was the beautiful Venetian lady in the hands of two of the robbers, who, during the confusion of the fight, carried her shrieking up the mountain. He saw her dress gleaming among the bushes, and he sprang up the rocks to intercept the robbers as they bore off their prey. The ruggedness of the steep and the entanglements of the bushes delayed and impeded him. He lost sight of the lady, but was still guided by her cries, which grew fainter and fainter. They were off to the left, while the reports of muskets showed that the battle was raging to the right. At length he came upon what appeared to be a rugged footpath, faintly worn in a gully of the rocks, and beheld the ruffians at some distance hurrying the lady up the defile. One of them, hearing his approach, let go his prey, advanced towards him, and leveling the carbine, which had been slung on his back, fired. The ball whizzed through the Englishman's hat, and carried with it some of his hair. He returned the fire with one of his pistols, and the robber fell. The other brigand now dropped the lady, and drawing a long pistol from his belt, fired on his adversary with deliberate aim. The ball passed between his left arm and his side, slightly wounding the arm. The Englishman advanced, and discharged his remaining pistol, which wounded the robber, but not severely.

The brigand drew a stiletto and rushed upon his adversary, who eluded the blow, receiving merely a slight wound, and defended himself with his pistol, which had a spring bayonet. They closed with each other, and a desperate struggle ensued. The robber was a square-built, thickset man, powerful, muscular, and active. The Englishman, though of larger frame and greater strength, was less active, and less accustomed to athletic exercises and feats of hardihood, but he showed himself practiced and skilled in the art of defense. They were on a craggy height, and the Englishman perceived that his antagonist was striving

to press him to the edge. A side glance showed him also the robber whom he had first wounded, scrambling up to the assistance of his comrade, stiletto in hand. He had in fact attained the summit of the cliff, he was within a few steps, and the Englishman felt that his case was desperate, when he heard suddenly the report of a pistol, and the ruffian fell. The shot came from John, who had arrived just in time to save his master.

The remaining robber, exhausted by loss of blood and the violence of the contest, showed signs of faltering. The Englishman pursued his advantage, pressed on him, and as his strength relaxed, dashed him headlong from the precipice. He looked after him, and saw him lying motionless among the rocks below.

The Englishman now sought the fair Venetian. He found her senseless on the ground. With his servant's assistance he bore her down to the road, where her husband was raving like one distracted. He had sought her in vain, and had given her over for lost; and when he beheld her thus brought back in safety, his joy was equally wild and ungovernable. He would have caught her insensible form to his bosom had not the Englishman restrained him. The latter, now really aroused, displayed a true tenderness and manly gallantry, which one would not have expected from his habitual phlegm. His kindness, however, was practical, not wasted in words. He dispatched John to the carriage for restoratives of all kinds, and, totally thoughtless of himself, was anxious only about his lovely charge. The occasional discharge of firearms along the height showed that a retreating fight was still kept up by the robbers. The lady gave signs of reviving animation. The Englishman, eager to get her from this place of danger, conveyed her to his own carriage, and committing her to the care of her husband, ordered the dragoons to escort them to Fondi. The Venetian would have insisted on the Englishman's getting into the carriage, but the latter refused. He poured forth a torrent of thanks and benedictions; but the Englishman beckoned to the postilions to drive on.

John now dressed his master's wounds, which were found not

to be serious, though he was faint with loss of blood. The Venetian carriage had been righted, and the baggage replaced; and getting into it, they set out on their way towards Fondi, leaving the foot soldiers still engaged in ferreting out the banditti.

Before arriving at Fondi the fair Venetian had completely recovered from her swoon. She made the usual question:

Where was she?

In the Englishman's carriage.

How had she escaped from the robbers?

The Englishman had rescued her.

Her transports were unbounded, and mingled with them were enthusiastic ejaculations of gratitude to her deliverer. A thousand times did she reproach herself for having accused him of coldness and insensibility. The moment she saw him she rushed into his arms with the vivacity of her nation, and hung about his neck in a speechless transport of gratitude. Never was man more embarrassed by the embraces of a fine woman.

"Tut, tut!" said the Englishman.

"You are wounded!" shrieked the fair Venetian, as she saw blood upon his clothes.

"Pooh! nothing at all."

"My deliverer! my angel!" exclaimed she, clasping him again round the neck, and sobbing on his bosom.

"Pish!" said the Englishman, with a good-humored tone, but looking somewhat foolish; "this is all humbug."

The fair Venetian, however, has never since accused the English of insensibility.

PART IV.

THE MONEY DIGGERS.

FOUND AMONG THE PAPERS OF THE LATE DIEDRICH KNICKERBOCKER.

"Now I remember those old women's words,
Who in my youth would tell me winter's tales:
And speak of sprites and ghosts that glide by night
About the place where treasure hath been hid."

MARLOWE'S *Jew of Malta.*

HELL GATE.

ABOUT six miles from the renowned city of the Manhattoes,[1] in that sound, or arm of the sea, which passes between the mainland and Nassau,[2] or Long Island, there is a narrow strait, where the current is violently compressed between shouldering promontories, and horribly perplexed by rocks and shoals. Being, at the best of times, a very violent, impetuous current, it takes these impediments in mighty dudgeon, boiling in whirlpools, brawling and fretting in ripples, raging and roaring in rapids and breakers, and, in short, indulging in all kinds of wrongheaded paroxysms. At such times, woe to any unlucky vessel that ventures within its clutches.

This termagant humor, however, prevails only at certain times of tide. At low water, for instance, it is as pacific a stream as you would wish to see; but as the tide rises it begins to fret; at half tide it roars with might and main, like a bull bellowing for more drink; but when the tide is full it relapses into quiet, and, for a time, sleeps as soundly as an alderman after dinner. In fact, it may be compared to a quarrelsome toper, who is a peaceable fellow enough when he has no liquor at all, or when he has a skin full, but who, when half-seas-over,[3] plays the very devil.

This mighty, blustering, bullying, hard-drinking little strait was a place of great danger and perplexity to the Dutch navigators

[1] Manhattan Island, now New York City, derived its name from the Manhattoes, or Manhattans, the tribe of Indians inhabiting the island when it was discovered by the Dutch.

[2] Nassau was the old name for Long Island, which is separated from New York by the East River.

[3] Slang for "half intoxicated."

of ancient days, hectoring their tub-built barks in a most unruly style, whirling them about in a manner to make any but a Dutchman giddy, and not unfrequently stranding them upon rocks and reefs, as it did the famous squadron of Oloffe the Dreamer [1] when seeking a place to found the city of the Manhattoes. Whereupon, out of sheer spleen, they denominated it *Helle gat*, and solemnly gave it over to the devil. This appellation has since been aptly rendered into English by the name of Hell Gate,[2] and into nonsense by the name of *Hurl* Gate, according to certain foreign intruders, who neither understood Dutch nor English — may St. Nicholas [3] confound them !

This strait of Hell Gate was a place of great awe and perilous enterprise to me in my boyhood, having been much of a navigator on those small seas, and having more than once run the risk of shipwreck and drowning in the course of certain holiday voyages, to which, in common with other Dutch urchins, I was rather prone. Indeed, partly from the name, and partly from various strange circumstances connected with it, this place had far more terrors in the eyes of my truant companions and myself than had Scylla [4] and Charybdis [4] for the navigators of yore.

[1] Oloffe van Kortlandt or van Cortlandt (1600–84), mayor of New York from 1655 almost uninterruptedly till 1664. Irving tells us that he was nicknamed "the Dreamer" because of his marvelous talent for dreaming, "for there was never anything of consequence happened but he declared he had previously dreamed it."

[2] Hell Gate, or Hurl Gate, is a navigable channel connecting Long Island Sound, through the East River, with New York Harbor and the Hudson. The numerous reefs in this channel (bearing the curious names of Hog Back, Hen and Chickens, Pot Rock, Frying Pan, etc.), and the swift, shifting eddies they produced, were a source of great danger and occasioned many wrecks until they were removed or leveled by blasting between 1870 and 1885.

[3] St. Nicholas, the guardian and patron of children, merchants, and sailors. He is the Santa Claus (or Klaus) of the Dutch. The date of his birth is unknown; he died in 340.

[4] Scylla, or Sciglio, is a celebrated rocky headland in the narrowest part of the Strait of Messina, directly opposite the dangerous whirlpool of

In the midst of this strait, and hard by a group of rocks called the Hen and Chickens, there lay the wreck of a vessel which had been entangled in the whirlpools and stranded during a storm. There was a wild story told to us of this being the wreck of a pirate, and some tale of bloody murder which I cannot now recollect, but which made us regard it with great awe, and keep far from it in our cruisings. Indeed, the desolate look of the forlorn hulk, and the fearful place where it lay rotting, were enough to awaken strange notions. A row of timberheads, blackened by time, just peered above the surface at high water; but at low tide a considerable part of the hull was bare, and its great ribs or timbers, partly stripped of their planks, and dripping with seaweeds, looked like the huge skeleton of some sea monster. There was also the stump of a mast, with a few ropes and blocks swinging about and whistling in the wind, while the sea gull wheeled and screamed around the melancholy carcass. I have a faint recollection of some hobgoblin tale of sailors' ghosts being seen about this wreck at night, with bare skulls, and blue lights in their sockets instead of eyes; but I have forgotten all the particulars.

In fact, the whole of this neighborhood was like the straits of Pelorus[1] of yore, a region of fable and romance to me. From the strait to the Manhattoes, the borders of the Sound are greatly diversified, being broken and indented by rocky nooks overhung with trees, which give them a wild and romantic look. In the time of my boyhood they abounded with traditions about pirates, ghosts, smugglers, and buried money, which had a wonderful effect upon the young minds of my companions and myself.

As I grew to more mature years, I made diligent research after the truth of these strange traditions, for I have always been

Charybdis. It was a place of great terror to ancient navigators, who in trying to avoid Scylla would fall into Charybdis.

[1] Cape Pelorus (now Cape Faro) at the northeastern extremity of the island of Sicily, bounds, with the opposite coast of Calabria, that part of the Strait of Messina which contains Scylla and Charybdis.

a curious investigator of the valuable, but obscure, branches of the history of my native province. I found infinite difficulty, however, in arriving at any precise information. In seeking to dig up one fact, it is incredible the number of fables that I unearthed. I will say nothing of the Devil's Stepping-Stones,[1] by which the arch fiend made his retreat from Connecticut to Long Island, across the Sound, seeing the subject is likely to be learnedly treated by a worthy friend and contemporary historian, whom I have furnished with particulars thereof. Neither will I say anything of the black man in a three-cornered hat, seated in the stern of a jolly-boat, who used to be seen about Hell Gate in stormy weather, and who went by the name of the "pirate's *spuke*" (i.e., pirate's ghost), and whom, it is said, old Governor Stuyvesant[2] once shot with a silver bullet, because I never could meet with any person of stanch credibility who professed to have seen this specter, unless it were the widow of Manus Conklen, the blacksmith of Frogsneck;[3] but then, poor woman, she was a little purblind, and might have been mistaken, though they say she saw farther than other folks in the dark.

All this, however, was but little satisfactory in regard to the tales of pirates and their buried money, about which I was most

[1] The Stepping-Stones are rocks projecting in a line from the shore of Long Island into Long Island Sound, directly opposite City Island, about eleven miles from New York City. The legend relates that the arch fiend went to war with the Connecticut Indians to settle a claim to the ownership of Connecticut. Being defeated, he retreated from Connecticut, keeping close to the Sound till he reached the point where, the tide being low, these rocks showed their heads, and he was able to avail himself of them as stepping-stones to Long Island. A very interesting account of the devil and his stepping-stones may be found in the Collections of the New York Historical Society, second series, vol. ii. 1849, — Memoir on Names in New York, by Judge Egbert Benson, first president of the New York Historical Society.

[2] Peter Stuyvesant (1602–82), the last Dutch governor of New Netherlands, the old name for New York.

[3] A corruption of Throgg's Neck, a point of land on the north side of the entrance to Long Island Sound.

curious; and the following is all that I could, for a long time, collect, that had anything like an air of authenticity.

KIDD THE PIRATE.

IN old times, just after the territory of the New Netherlands had been wrested from the hands of their High Mightinesses, the Lords States-General[1] of Holland, by King Charles II.,[2] and while it was as yet in an unquiet state, the province was a great resort of random adventurers, loose livers, and all that class of haphazard fellows who live by their wits, and dislike the old-fashioned restraint of law and gospel. Among these, the foremost were the buccaneers. These were rovers of the deep, who perhaps in time of war had been educated in those schools of piracy, the privateers,[3] but having once tasted the sweets of plunder, had ever retained a hankering after it. There is but a slight step from the privateersman to the pirate; both fight for the love of plunder; only that the latter is the bravest, as he dares both the enemy and the gallows.

But in whatever school they had been taught, the buccaneers that kept about the English colonies were daring fellows, and

[1] A title of dignity given to the members of the legislative assembly of the Netherlands.

[2] Charles II. (1630–85), King of England, granted to his brother, the Duke of York, a large tract of land, including the New Netherlands, which had been claimed and settled by the Dutch. In 1664 the Duke of York arrived before New Amsterdam with a large fleet, and the Dutch were obliged to surrender their claims. Thereafter the state and city were called New York.

[3] The privateers were armed private vessels, manned by privateersmen, who were commissioned to cruise against an enemy's commerce. Buccaneers, or pirates, were unauthorized plunderers of any ships.

made sad work in times of peace among the Spanish settlements and Spanish merchantmen. The easy access to the harbor of the Manhattoes, the number of hiding places about its waters, and the laxity of its scarcely organized government, made it a great rendezvous of the pirates, where they might dispose of their booty, and concert new depredations. As they brought home with them wealthy lading of all kinds, the luxuries of the tropics and the sumptuous spoils of the Spanish provinces, and disposed of them with the proverbial carelessness of freebooters, they were welcome visitors to the thrifty traders of the Manhattoes. Crews of these desperadoes, therefore, the runagates[1] of every country and every clime, might be seen swaggering in open day about the streets of the little burgh, elbowing its quiet mynheers,[2] trafficking away their rich, outlandish plunder at half or quarter price to the wary merchant, and then squandering their prize money in taverns, — drinking, gambling, singing, swearing, shouting, and astounding the neighborhood with midnight brawl and ruffian revelry.

At length these excesses rose to such a height as to become a scandal to the provinces, and to call loudly for the interposition of government. Measures were accordingly taken to put a stop to the widely extended evil, and to ferret this vermin brood out of the colonies.

Among the agents employed to execute this purpose was the notorious Captain Kidd.[3] He had long been an equivocal char-

[1] Fugitives.

[2] Mynheer is the Dutch equivalent for "Mr.;" hence "mynheers," Dutchmen.

[3] William Kidd (1650–1701), a Scotch navigator, was intrusted on Governor Bellomont's recommendation with the command of a ship called the *Adventure*, whose mission was to suppress piracy. It soon began to be rumored that he had made several unlawful captures, among them that of an East Indian ship called the *Quedah Merchant*. On his arrival in Boston in 1699 he was arrested on a charge of piracy, and sent to England. Though the charge of piracy could not be proved against him, he was executed, for the murder of one of his crew, in 1701. Before his arrest

acter,—one of those nondescript animals of the ocean that are neither fish, flesh, nor fowl. He was somewhat of a trader, something more of a smuggler, with a considerable dash of the picaroon.[1] He had traded for many years among the pirates, in a little rakish,[2] mosquito-built[3] vessel, that could run into all kinds of waters. He knew all their haunts and lurking places, was always hooking about on mysterious voyages, and was as busy as a Mother Cary's chicken[4] in a storm.

This nondescript personage was pitched upon by government as the very man to hunt the pirates by sea, upon the good old maxim of "setting a rogue to catch a rogue," or as otters are sometimes used to catch their cousins-german,[5] the fish.

Kidd accordingly sailed for New York, in 1695, in a gallant vessel called the *Adventure Galley*, well armed and duly commissioned. On arriving at his old haunts, however, he shipped his crew on new terms, enlisted a number of his old comrades,—lads of the knife and the pistol,—and then set sail for the East. Instead of cruising against pirates, he turned pirate himself, steered to the Madeiras,[6] to Bonavista,[6] and Madagascar,[7] and cruised about the entrance of the Red Sea. Here, among other maritime robberies, he captured a rich Quedah[8] merchantman,

he had deposited on Gardiner's Isle, off the east end of Long Island, a considerable portion of his wealth. As this, when recovered, did not nearly equal the fabulous riches ascribed to him, popular rumor gave rise to the various reports of treasures he had hidden.

1 Pirate.

2 A rakish vessel is one having an unusual amount of rake or inclination of the masts. Piratical vessels were distinguished for their rakish build.

3 A mosquito fleet is any assemblage of small craft; hence, a mosquito-built vessel is a small vessel.

4 "Mother Cary's chicken," a name for the stormy petrel, whose appearance always forbodes a storm.

5 First cousins.

6 The Madeiras and Bonavista are islands of the eastern Atlantic.

7 A large island off the eastern coast of Africa.

8 Quedah, or Queda, is a state of the Malay Peninsula, the extreme southern point of the mainland of Asia.

manned by Moors,[1] though commanded by an Englishman. Kidd would fain have passed this off for a worthy exploit, as being a kind of crusade against the infidels, but government had long since lost all relish for such Christian triumphs.

After roaming the seas, trafficking his prizes, and changing from ship to ship, Kidd had the hardihood to return to Boston, laden with booty, with a crew of swaggering companions at his heels.

Times, however, were changed. The buccaneers could no longer show a whisker in the colonies with impunity. The new governor, Lord Bellomont,[2] had signalized himself by his zeal in extirpating these offenders, and was doubly exasperated against Kidd, having been instrumental in appointing him to the trust which he had betrayed. No sooner, therefore, did he show himself in Boston, than the alarm was given of his reappearance, and measures were taken to arrest this cutpurse[3] of the ocean. The daring character which Kidd had acquired, however, and the desperate fellows who followed like bulldogs at his heels, caused a little delay in his arrest. He took advantage of this, it is said, to bury the greater part of his treasures, and then carried a high head about the streets of Boston. He even attempted to defend himself when arrested, but was secured and thrown into prison, with his followers. Such was the formidable character of this pirate and his crew that it was thought advisable to dispatch a frigate to bring them to England. Great exertions were made to screen him from justice, but in vain; he and his comrades were tried, condemned, and hanged at Execution Dock in London.

[1] A race inhabiting the Barbary States in northern Africa.

[2] Richard Coote, Earl of Bellomont (1636–1701), was governor of New York and Massachusetts. Being specially admonished on his appointment to the governorship by William III. to put a stop to piracy, he organized a private expedition, with Kidd as leader, to suppress the pirates. He believed the rumors of Kidd's dishonesty and had him arrested when he reached Boston.

[3] One who cuts purses; hence, a robber.

Kidd died hard, for the rope with which he was first tied up broke with his weight, and he tumbled to the ground. He was tied up a second time, and more effectually; hence came, doubtless, the story of Kidd's having a charmed life, and that he had to be twice hanged.

Such is the main outline of Kidd's history, but it has given birth to an innumerable progeny of traditions. The report of his having buried great treasures of gold and jewels before his arrest, set the brains of all the good people along the coast in a ferment. There were rumors on rumors of great sums of money found here and there, sometimes in one part of the country, sometimes in another; of coins with Moorish inscriptions, doubtless the spoils of his Eastern prizes, but which the common people looked upon with superstitious awe, regarding the Moorish letters as diabolical or magical characters.

Some reported the treasure to have been buried in solitary, unsettled places, about Plymouth and Cape Cod; but by degrees various other parts, not only on the eastern coast, but along the shores of the Sound, and even of Manhattan and Long Island, were gilded by these rumors. In fact, the rigorous measures of Lord Bellomont spread sudden consternation among the buccaneers in every part of the provinces; they secreted their money and jewels in lonely, out of the way places, about the wild shores of the rivers and seacoast, and dispersed themselves over the face of the country. The hand of justice prevented many of them from ever returning to regain their buried treasures, which remained, and remain probably to this day, objects of enterprise for the money digger.

This is the cause of those frequent reports of trees and rocks bearing mysterious marks, supposed to indicate the spots where treasures lay hidden, and many have been the ransackings after the pirate's booty. In all the stories which once abounded of these enterprises, the devil played a conspicuous part. Either he was conciliated by ceremonies and invocations, or some solemn compact was made with him. Still he was ever prone to play the

money diggers some slippery trick. Some would dig so far as to come to an iron chest, when some baffling circumstance was sure to take place. Either the earth would fall in and fill up the pit, or some direful noise or apparition would frighten the party from the place. Sometimes the devil himself would appear, and bear off the prize when within their very grasp, and if they revisited the place the next day not a trace would be found of their labors of the preceding night.

All these rumors, however, were extremely vague, and for a long time tantalized, without gratifying, my curiosity. There is nothing in this world so hard to get at as truth, and there is nothing in this world but truth that I care for. I sought among all my favorite sources of authentic information, the oldest inhabitants, and particularly the old Dutch wives of the province; but though I flatter myself that I am better versed than most men in the curious history of my native province, yet for a long time my inquiries were unattended with any substantial result.

At length it happened that one calm day in the latter part of summer, I was relaxing myself from the toils of severe study by a day's amusement in fishing in those waters which had been the favorite resort of my boyhood. I was in company with several worthy burghers of my native city, among whom were more than one illustrious member of the corporation, whose names, did I dare to mention them, would do honor to my humble page. Our sport was indifferent. The fish did not bite freely, and we frequently changed our fishing ground without bettering our luck. We were at length anchored close under a ledge of rocky coast, on the eastern side of the island of Manhatta. It was a still, warm day. The stream whirled and dimpled by us, without a wave or even a ripple, and everything was so calm and quiet that it was almost startling when the kingfisher would pitch himself from the branch of some high tree, and after suspending himself for a moment in the air, to take his aim, would souse into the smooth water after his prey. While we were lolling in our boat, half drowsy with the warm stillness of the day and the

dullness of our sport, one of our party, a worthy alderman, was overtaken by a slumber, and, as he dozed, suffered the sinker of his drop line to lie upon the bottom of the river. On waking, he found he had caught something of importance from the weight. On drawing it to the surface, we were much surprised to find it a long pistol of very curious and outlandish fashion, which, from its rusted condition, and its stock being worm-eaten and covered with barnacles, appeared to have lain a long time under water. The unexpected appearance of this document of warfare occasioned much speculation among my pacific companions. One supposed it to have fallen there during the Revolutionary War; [1] another, from the peculiarity of its fashion, attributed it to the voyagers in the earliest days of the settlement, perchance to the renowned Adriaen Block,[2] who explored the Sound, and discovered Block Island, since so noted for its cheese. But a third, after regarding it for some time, pronounced it to be of veritable Spanish workmanship.

"I'll warrant," said he, "if this pistol could talk, it would tell strange stories of hard fights among the Spanish Dons.[3] I've no doubt but it is a relic of the buccaneers of old times; who knows but it belonged to Kidd himself?"

"Ah! that Kidd was a resolute fellow," cried an old, iron-faced Cape Cod whaler. "There's a fine old song about him, all to the tune of

> 'My name was Robert Kidd,
> When I sailed, when I sailed,'

and then it tells about how he gained the devil's good graces by burying the Bible:

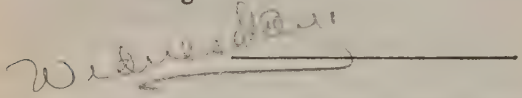
1 The American Revolution or War of Independence, 1775–83.

2 A famous Dutch navigator who visited Manhattan Island in 1613–14, sailed along the coast of Long Island, and discovered Block Island, nine miles from the mainland of Rhode Island.

3 A Spanish title, formerly given to men of rank, but now used in a sense equivalent to our "Mr.," and given to all classes.

'I'd a Bible in my hand,
When I sailed, when I sailed,
And I sunk it in the sand
When I sailed.'[1]

"Odsfish! if I thought this pistol had belonged to Kidd, I should set great store by it, for curiosity's sake. By the way, I recollect a story about a fellow who once dug up Kidd's buried money, which was written by a neighbor of mine, and which I learned by heart. As the fish don't bite just now, I'll tell it to you, by way of passing away the time." And so saying, he gave us the following narration.



THE DEVIL AND TOM WALKER.

A FEW miles from Boston, in Massachusetts, there is a deep inlet, winding several miles into the interior of the country from Charles Bay,[2] and terminating in a thickly wooded swamp or morass. On one side of this inlet is a beautiful dark grove; on the opposite side the land rises abruptly from the water's edge into a high ridge, on which grow a few scattered oaks of great age and immense size. Under one of these gigantic trees, according to old stories, there was a great amount of treasure buried by Kidd the pirate. The inlet allowed a facility to bring the money in a boat, secretly and at night, to the very foot of the hill; the elevation of the place permitted a good lookout to be kept that no one was at hand; while the remarkable trees formed good landmarks by which the place might easily be found again. The old stories add, moreover, that the devil presided at the hiding of the money, and took it under his guardianship; but this, it is well known, he always does with buried treasure, particularly when

[1] An old New England ballad attributed to Captain Kidd.

[2] An old name for the estuary into which the Charles River expands between Boston and Cambridge. It is now known as Back Bay.

it has been ill gotten. Be that as it may, Kidd never returned to recover his wealth, being shortly after seized at Boston, sent out to England, and there hanged for a pirate.

About the year 1727, just at the time that earthquakes were prevalent in New England and shook many tall sinners down upon their knees, there lived near this place a meager, miserly fellow, of the name of Tom Walker. He had a wife as miserly as himself; they were so miserly that they even conspired to cheat each other. Whatever the woman could lay hands on she hid away; a hen could not cackle but she was on the alert to secure the new laid egg. Her husband was continually prying about to detect her secret hoards, and many and fierce were the conflicts that took place about what ought to have been common property. They lived in a forlorn-looking house that stood alone and had an air of starvation. A few straggling savin[1] trees, emblems of sterility, grew near it; no smoke ever curled from its chimney, no traveler stopped at its door. A miserable horse, whose ribs were as articulate as the bars of a gridiron, stalked about a field where a thin carpet of moss, scarcely covering the ragged beds of pudding stone, tantalized and balked his hunger; and sometimes he would lean his head over the fence, look piteously at the passer-by, and seem to petition deliverance from this land of famine.

The house and its inmates had altogether a bad name. Tom's wife was a tall termagant, fierce of temper, loud of tongue, and strong of arm. Her voice was often heard in wordy warfare with her husband, and his face sometimes showed signs that their conflicts were not confined to words. No one ventured, however, to interfere between them. The lonely wayfarer shrunk within himself at the horrid clamor and clapperclawing,[2] eyed the den of discord askance, and hurried on his way, rejoicing, if a bachelor, in his celibacy.

One day that Tom Walker had been to a distant part of the

[1] The American red cedar. It grows in dry hills or deep swamps.

[2] Scolding.

neighborhood, he took what he considered a short cut homeward, through the swamp. Like most short cuts it was an ill-chosen route. The swamp was thickly grown with great gloomy pines and hemlocks, some of them ninety feet high, which made it dark at noonday, and a retreat for all the owls of the neighborhood. It was full of pits and quagmires, partly covered with weeds and mosses, where the green surface often betrayed the traveler into a gulf of black, smothering mud; there were also dark and stagnant pools, the abodes of the tadpole, the bullfrog, and the water snake, where the trunks of pines and hemlocks lay half drowned, half rotting, looking like alligators sleeping in the mire.

Tom had long been picking his way cautiously through this treacherous forest, stepping from tuft to tuft of rushes and roots, which afforded precarious footholds among deep sloughs, or pacing carefully, like a cat, along the prostrate trunks of trees, startled now and then by the sudden screaming of the bittern or the quacking of a wild duck rising on the wing from some solitary pool. At length he arrived at a firm piece of ground, which ran out like a peninsula into the deep bosom of the swamp. It had been one of the strongholds of the Indians during their wars with the first colonists. Here they had thrown up a kind of fort, which they had looked upon as almost impregnable, and had used as a place of refuge for their squaws and children. Nothing remained of the old Indian fort but a few embankments, gradually sinking to the level of the surrounding earth, and already overgrown in part by oaks and other forest trees, the foliage of which formed a contrast to the dark pines and hemlocks of the swamp.

It was late in the dusk of evening when Tom Walker reached the old fort, and he paused there awhile to rest himself. Any one but he would have felt unwilling to linger in this lonely, melancholy place, for the common people had a bad opinion of it, from the stories handed down from the time of the Indian wars, when it was asserted that the savages held incantations here, and made sacrifices to the evil spirit.

Tom Walker, however, was not a man to be troubled with

any fears of the kind. He reposed himself for some time on the trunk of a fallen hemlock, listening to the boding cry of the tree toad, and delving with his walking staff into a mound of black mold at his feet. As he turned up the soil unconsciously, his staff struck against something hard. He raked it out of the vegetable mold, and lo! a cloven skull, with an Indian tomahawk buried deep in it, lay before him. The rust on the weapon showed the time that had elapsed since this death blow had been given. It was a dreary memento of the fierce struggle that had taken place in this last foothold of the Indian warriors.

"Humph!" said Tom Walker, as he gave it a kick to shake the dirt from it.

"Let that skull alone!" said a gruff voice. Tom lifted up his eyes, and beheld a great black man seated directly opposite him on the stump of a tree. He was exceedingly surprised, having neither heard nor seen any one approach, and he was still more perplexed on observing, as well as the gathering gloom would permit, that the stranger was neither negro nor Indian. It is true he was dressed in a rude, half Indian garb, and had a red belt or sash swathed round his body, but his face was neither black nor copper color, but swarthy and dingy, and begrimed with soot, as if he had been accustomed to toil among fires and forges. He had a shock of coarse black hair, that stood out from his head in all directions, and bore an ax on his shoulder.

He scowled for a moment at Tom with a pair of great red eyes.

"What are you doing on my grounds?" said the black man, with a hoarse, growling voice.

"Your grounds!" said Tom with a sneer, "no more your grounds than mine; they belong to Deacon Peabody."

"Deacon Peabody be d—d," said the stranger, "as I flatter myself he will be if he does not look more to his own sins and less to those of his neighbors. Look yonder, and see how Deacon Peabody is faring."

Tom looked in the direction that the stranger pointed, and beheld one of the great trees, fair and flourishing without, but

rotten at the core, and saw that it had been nearly hewn through, so that the first high wind was likely to blow it down. On the bark of the tree was scored the name of Deacon Peabody, an eminent man who had waxed wealthy by driving shrewd bargains with the Indians. He now looked around, and found most of the tall trees marked with the name of some great man of the colony, and all more or less scored by the ax. The one on which he had been seated, and which had evidently just been hewn down, bore the name of Crowninshield, and he recollected a mighty rich man of that name, who made a vulgar display of wealth which it was whispered he had acquired by buccaneering.

"He's just ready for burning!" said the black man, with a growl of triumph. "You see I am likely to have a good stock of firewood for winter."

"But what right have you," said Tom, "to cut down Deacon Peabody's timber?"

"The right of a prior claim," said the other. "This woodland belonged to me long before one of your white-faced race put foot upon the soil."

"And pray, who are you, if I may be so bold?" said Tom.

"Oh, I go by various names. I am the wild 'huntsman' in some countries, the 'black miner' in others. In this neighborhood I am known by the name of the 'black woodsman.' I am he to whom the red men consecrated this spot, and in honor of whom they now and then roasted a white man, by way of sweet-smelling sacrifice. Since the red men have been exterminated by you white savages, I amuse myself by presiding at the persecutions of Quakers[1] and Anabaptists;[2] I am the great patron and

[1] Quakers, or Friends, a religious sect founded by George Fox in 1650. They were persecuted in England and fled to New England for refuge, where they met with the same fate at the hands of the Puritans, until they found a refuge in the colony founded by Penn in Pennsylvania.

[2] The Anabaptists were a religious sect which arose in Germany in the sixteenth century, and agitated reforms of all sorts. They suffered cruel persecutions in Germany, the Netherlands, and England.

prompter of slave dealers, and the grand master of the Salem witches." [1]

"The upshot of all which is that, if I mistake not," said Tom sturdily, "you are he commonly called 'Old Scratch.'" [2]

"The same, at your service!" replied the black man, with a half civil nod.

Such was the opening of this interview, according to the old story, though it has almost too familiar an air to be credited. One would think that to meet with such a singular personage, in this wild, lonely place, would have shaken any man's nerves; but Tom was a hard-minded fellow, not easily daunted, and he had lived so long with a termagant wife that he did not even fear the devil.

It is said that after this commencement they had a long and earnest conversation together, as Tom returned homeward. The black man told him of great sums of money buried by Kidd the pirate under the oak trees on the high ridge, not far from the morass. All these were under his command, and protected by his power, so that none could find them but such as propitiated his favor. These he offered to place within Tom Walker's reach, having conceived an especial kindness for him; but they were to be had only on certain conditions. What these conditions were may be easily surmised, though Tom never disclosed them publicly. They must have been very hard, for he required time to think of them, and he was not a man to stick at trifles when money was in view. When they had reached the edge of the swamp the stranger paused. "What proof have I that all you have been telling me is true?" said Tom. "There's my signature," said the black man, pressing his finger on Tom's forehead. So saying, he turned off among the thickets of the swamp, and

[1] The city of Salem, Mass., was the chief scene of the persecution of the Quakers in 1661, and of the strange delusion known as the "Salem Witchcraft," in 1692, which led to the torture and hanging of innocent men, women, and children.

[2] An ancient jocular name for the devil.

seemed, as Tom said, to go down, down, down into the earth, until nothing but his head and shoulders could be seen, and so on, until he totally disappeared.

When Tom reached home he found the black print of a finger burned, as it were, into his forehead, which nothing could obliterate.

The first news his wife had to tell him was the sudden death of Absalom Crowninshield, the rich buccaneer. It was announced in the papers with the usual flourish, that a great man had fallen in Israel.

Tom recollected the tree which his black friend had just hewn down, and which was ready for burning. "Let the freebooter roast," said Tom; "who cares!" He now felt convinced that all he had heard and seen was no illusion.

He was not prone to let his wife into his confidence, but as this was an uneasy secret he willingly shared it with her. All her avarice was awakened at the mention of hidden gold, and she urged her husband to comply with the black man's terms, and secure what would make them wealthy for life. However Tom might have felt disposed to sell himself to the devil, he was determined not to do so to oblige his wife, so he flatly refused, out of the mere spirit of contradiction. Many and bitter were the quarrels they had on the subject, but the more she talked the more resolute was Tom not to be damned to please her.

At length she determined to drive the bargain on her own account, and, if she succeeded, to keep all the gain to herself. Being of the same fearless temper as her husband, she set off for the old Indian fort towards the close of a summer's day. She was many hours absent. When she came back she was reserved and sullen in her replies. She spoke something of a black man whom she had met about twilight hewing at the root of a tall tree. He was sulky, however, and would not come to terms; she was to go again with a propitiatory offering, but what it was she forbore to say.

The next evening she set off again for the swamp, with her

apron heavily laden. Tom waited and waited for her, but in vain; midnight came, but she did not make her appearance; morning, noon, night returned, but still she did not come. Tom now grew uneasy for her safety, especially as he found she had carried off in her apron the silver teapot and spoons and every portable article of value. Another night elapsed, another morning came, but no wife. In a word, she was never heard of more.

What was her real fate nobody knows, in consequence of so many pretending to know. It is one of those facts which have become confounded by a variety of historians. Some asserted that she lost her way among the tangled mazes of the swamp, and sank into some pit or slough; others, more uncharitable, hinted that she had eloped with the household booty, and made off to some other province; while others surmised that the tempter had decoyed her into a dismal quagmire, on the top of which her hat was found lying. In confirmation of this it was said a great black man, with an ax on his shoulder, was seen late that very evening coming out of the swamp, carrying a bundle tied in a check apron, with an air of surly triumph.

The most current and probable story, however, observes that Tom Walker grew so anxious about the fate of his wife and his property that he set out at length to seek them both at the Indian fort. During a long summer's afternoon he searched about the gloomy place, but no wife was to be seen. He called her name repeatedly, but she was nowhere to be heard. The bittern alone responded to his voice, as he flew screaming by, or the bullfrog croaked dolefully from a neighboring pool. At length, it is said, just in the brown hour of twilight, when the owls began to hoot and the bats to flit about, his attention was attracted by the clamor of carrion crows hovering about a cypress tree. He looked up, and beheld a bundle tied in a check apron and hanging in the branches of the tree, with a great vulture perched hard by, as if keeping watch upon it. He leaped with joy, for he recognized his wife's apron and supposed it to contain the household valuables.

"Let us get hold of the property," said he consolingly to himself, "and we will endeavor to do without the woman."

As he scrambled up the tree the vulture spread its wide wings and sailed off, screaming, into the deep shadows of the forest. Tom seized the check apron, but, woeful sight! found nothing but a heart and liver tied up in it!

Such, according to this most authentic old story, was all that was to be found of Tom's wife. She had probably attempted to deal with the black man as she had been accustomed to deal with her husband; but though a female scold is generally considered a match for the devil, yet in this instance she appears to have had the worst of it. She must have died game,[1] however, for it is said Tom noticed many prints of cloven feet deeply stamped about the tree, and found handfuls of hair that looked as if they had been plucked from the coarse black shock of the woodman. Tom knew his wife's prowess by experience. He shrugged his shoulders as he looked at the signs of a fierce clapperclawing. "Egad," said he to himself, "Old Scratch must have had a tough time of it!"

Tom consoled himself for the loss of his property with the loss of his wife, for he was a man of fortitude. He even felt something like gratitude towards the black woodman, who, he considered, had done him a kindness. He sought, therefore, to cultivate a further acquaintance with him, but for some time without success; the old blacklegs played shy, for whatever people may think, he is not always to be had for calling for; he knows how to play his cards when pretty sure of his game.

At length, it is said, when delay had whetted Tom's eagerness to the quick, and prepared him to agree to anything rather than not gain the promised treasure, he met the black man one evening in his usual woodman's dress, with his ax on his shoulder, sauntering along the swamp, and humming a tune. He affected to receive Tom's advances with great indifference, made brief replies, and went on humming his tune.

[1] "Died game," i.e., died fighting.

By degrees, however, Tom brought him to business, and they began to haggle about the terms on which the former was to have the pirate's treasure. There was one condition which need not be mentioned, being generally understood in all cases where the devil grants favors; but there were others about which, though of less importance, he was inflexibly obstinate. He insisted that the money found through his means should be employed in his service. He proposed, therefore, that Tom should employ it in the black traffic,—that is to say, that he should fit out a slave ship. This, however, Tom resolutely refused; he was bad enough, in all conscience, but the devil himself could not tempt him to turn slave trader.

Finding Tom so squeamish on this point, he did not insist upon it, but proposed, instead, that he should turn usurer, the devil being extremely anxious for the increase of usurers, looking upon them as his peculiar people.

To this no objections were made, for it was just to Tom's taste.

"You shall open a broker's shop in Boston next month," said the black man.

"I'll do it to-morrow, if you wish," said Tom Walker.

"You shall lend money at two per cent. a month."

"Egad, I'll charge four!" replied Tom Walker.

"You shall extort bonds, foreclose mortgages, drive the merchants to bankruptcy"—

"I'll drive them to the d—l!" cried Tom Walker.

"You are the usurer for my money!" said blacklegs with delight. "When will you want the rhino?"

"This very night."

"Done!" said the devil.

"Done!" said Tom Walker. So they shook hands and struck a bargain.

A few days' time saw Tom Walker seated behind his desk in a countinghouse in Boston.

His reputation for a ready-moneyed man, who would lend money out for a good consideration, soon spread abroad. Every-

body remembers the time of Governor Belcher,[1] when money was particularly scarce. It was a time of paper credit. The country had been deluged with government bills; the famous Land Bank[2] had been established; there had been a rage for speculating; the people had run mad with schemes for new settlements, for building cities in the wilderness; land jobbers went about with maps of grants and townships and Eldorados,[3] lying nobody knew where, but which everybody was ready to purchase. In a word, the great speculating fever which breaks out every now and then in the country had raged to an alarming degree, and everybody was dreaming of making sudden fortunes from nothing. As usual the fever had subsided, the dream had gone off, and the imaginary fortunes with it; the patients were left in doleful plight, and the whole country resounded with the consequent cry of "hard times."

At this propitious time of public distress did Tom Walker set up as usurer in Boston. His door was soon thronged by customers. The needy and adventurous, the gambling speculator, the dreaming land jobber, the thriftless tradesman, the merchant with cracked credit,—in short, every one driven to raise money by desperate means and desperate sacrifices hurried to Tom Walker.

Thus Tom was the universal friend of the needy, and acted like a "friend in need;" that is to say, he always exacted good pay and good security. In proportion to the distress of the ap-

[1] Jonathan Belcher (1681–1757), governor of Massachusetts and New Jersey.

[2] In 1740 the paper currency of New England had deteriorated to one fifth its value. The Land Bank was a private enterprise, established at this time for the purpose of relieving the financial difficulties. The English Parliament suppressed the new bank. This not only stopped the operations of the bank, but gave every bill holder a right to sue every partner or director for the sum he had lost.

[3] The Spaniards of the sixteenth century gave the name Eldorado to an imaginary country in the interior of South America, reputed to abound in gold and precious stones; hence, any region of fabulous wealth.

plicant was the hardness of his terms. He accumulated bonds and mortgages, gradually squeezed his customers closer and closer,[1] and sent them at length, dry as a sponge, from his door.

In this way he made money hand over hand,[2] became a rich and mighty man, and exalted his cocked hat[3] upon 'Change. He built himself, as usual, a vast house, out of ostentation, but left the greater part of it unfinished and unfurnished, out of parsimony. He even set up a carriage in the fullness of his vainglory, though he nearly starved the horses which drew it; and as the ungreased wheels groaned and screeched on the axletrees you would have thought you heard the souls of the poor debtors he was squeezing.

As Tom waxed old, however, he grew thoughtful. Having secured the good things of this world, he began to feel anxious about those of the next. He thought with regret on the bargain he had made with his black friend, and set his wits to work to cheat him out of the conditions. He became, therefore, all of a sudden, a violent churchgoer. He prayed loudly and strenuously, as if heaven were to be taken by force of lungs. Indeed, one might always tell when he had sinned most during the week by the clamor of his Sunday devotion. The quiet Christians who had been modestly and steadfastly traveling Zionward,[4] were struck with self-reproach at seeing themselves so suddenly outstripped in their career by this new-made convert. Tom was as rigid in religious, as in money, matters; he was a stern supervisor and censurer of his neighbors, and seemed to think every sin entered up to their account became a credit on his own side of the page. He even talked of the expediency of reviving the persecution of Quakers and Anabaptists. In a word, Tom's zeal became as notorious as his riches.

1 "Squeezed closer and closer," i.e., oppressed more and more.

2 "Hand over hand," i.e., at a rapid rate.

3 "Exalted his cocked hat," i.e., held up his head, and became a prominent personage.

4 Towards Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem; hence, towards heaven.

Still, in spite of all this strenuous attention to forms, Tom had a lurking dread that the devil, after all, would have his due. That he might not be taken unawares, therefore, it is said he always carried a small Bible in his coat pocket. He had also a great folio Bible on his countinghouse desk, and would frequently be found reading it when people called on business. On such occasions he would lay his green spectacles in the book, to mark the place, while he turned round to drive some usurious bargain.

Some say that Tom grew a little crack-brained in his old days, and that, fancying his end approaching, he had his horse new shod, saddled, and bridled, and buried with his feet uppermost, because he supposed that at the last day the world would be turned upside down, in which case he should find his horse standing ready for mounting, and he was determined at the worst to give his old friend a run for it. This, however, is probably a mere old wives' fable. If he really did take such a precaution it was totally superfluous; at least, so says the authentic old legend, which closes his story in the following manner.

One hot summer afternoon in the dog days, just as a terrible, black thunder gust was coming up, Tom sat in his countinghouse, in his white linen cap and India silk morning gown. He was on the point of foreclosing a mortgage, by which he would complete the ruin of an unlucky land speculator for whom he had professed the greatest friendship. The poor land jobber begged him to grant a few months' indulgence. Tom had grown testy and irritated, and refused another day.

"My family will be ruined and brought upon the parish," said the land jobber.

"Charity begins at home," replied Tom; "I must take care of myself in these hard times."

"You have made so much money out of me," said the speculator.

Tom lost his patience and his piety. "The devil take me," said he, "if I have made a farthing."

Just then there were three loud knocks at the street door. He stepped out to see who was there. A black man was holding a black horse, which neighed and stamped with impatience.

"Tom, you're come for," said the black fellow gruffly. Tom shrank back, but too late. He had left his little Bible at the bottom of his coat pocket, and his big Bible on the desk buried under the mortgage he was about to foreclose; never was sinner taken more unawares. The black man whisked him like a child into the saddle, gave the horse a lash, and away he galloped, with Tom on his back, in the midst of the thunderstorm. The clerks stuck their pens behind their ears, and stared after him from the windows. Away went Tom Walker, dashing down the streets, his white cap bobbing up and down, his morning gown fluttering in the wind, and his steed striking fire out of the pavement at every bound. When the clerks turned to look for the black man he had disappeared.

Tom Walker never returned to foreclose the mortgage. A countryman, who lived on the border of the swamp, reported that in the height of the thunder gust he had heard a great clattering of hoofs and a howling along the road, and running to the window caught sight of a figure such as I have described, on a horse that galloped like mad across the fields, over the hills, and down into the black hemlock swamp towards the old Indian fort, and that shortly after, a thunderbolt falling in that direction seemed to set the whole forest in a blaze.

The good people of Boston shook their heads and shrugged their shoulders, but had been so much accustomed to witches and goblins, and tricks of the devil, in all kinds of shapes, from the first settlement of the colony, that they were not so much horror-struck as might have been expected. Trustees were appointed to take charge of Tom's effects. There was nothing, however, to administer upon. On searching his coffers, all his bonds and mortgages were found reduced to cinders. In place of gold and silver his iron chest was filled with chips and shavings; two skeletons lay in his stable instead of his half starved

horses; and the very next day his great house took fire and was burned to the ground.

Such was the end of Tom Walker and his ill-gotten wealth. Let all griping money brokers lay this story to heart. The truth of it is not to be doubted. The very hole under the oak trees, whence he dug Kidd's money, is to be seen to this day, and the neighboring swamp and old Indian fort are often haunted in stormy nights by a figure on horseback, in morning gown and white cap, which is doubtless the troubled spirit of the usurer. In fact, the story has resolved itself into a proverb, and is the origin of that popular saying, so prevalent throughout New England, of "the devil and Tom Walker." [1]

Such, as nearly as I can recollect, was the purport of the tale told by the Cape Cod whaler. There were divers trivial particulars which I have omitted, and which whiled away the morning very pleasantly, until, the time of tide favorable to fishing being passed, it was proposed to land and refresh ourselves under the trees, till the noontide heat should have abated.

We accordingly landed on a delectable part of the island of Manhatta, in that shady and embowered tract formerly under the domain of the ancient family of the Hardenbrooks.[2] It was a spot well known to me in the course of the aquatic expeditions of my boyhood. Not far from where we landed there was an old Dutch family vault, constructed in the side of a bank, which had been an object of great awe and fable among my schoolboy associates. We had peeped into it during one of our coasting voyages, and been startled by the sight of moldering coffins and musty bones within; but what had given it the most fearful interest in our eyes was its being in some way connected with the pirate wreck which lay rotting among the rocks of Hell Gate. There were stories, also, of smuggling connected with it, particu-

[1] An old proverb used as a caution to usurers.

[2] Hardenbrook, or Harden Broeck, was the name of an early Dutch settler who accompanied Van Kortlandt in his explorations up the East River.

larly relating to a time when this retired spot was owned by a noted burgher called "Ready-Money Provost," a man of whom it was whispered that he had many mysterious dealings with parts beyond the seas. All these things, however, had been jumbled together in our minds in that vague way in which such themes are mingled up in the tales of boyhood.

While I was pondering upon these matters my companions had spread a repast, from the contents of our well stored pannier, under a broad chestnut, on the greensward which swept down to the water's edge. Here we solaced ourselves on the cool, grassy carpet during the warm, sunny hours of midday. While lolling on the grass, indulging in that kind of musing reverie of which I am fond, I summoned up the dusky recollections of my boyhood respecting this place, and repeated them like the imperfectly remembered traces of a dream, for the amusement of my companions. When I had finished, a worthy old burgher, John Josse Vandermoere, the same who once related to me the adventures of Dolph Heyliger,[1] broke silence, and observed that he recollected a story of money digging which occurred in this very neighborhood, and might account for some of the traditions which I had heard in my boyhood. As we knew him to be one of the most authentic narrators in the province we begged him to let us have the particulars, and accordingly, while we solaced ourselves with a clean, long pipe of Blasc Moore's best tobacco, the authentic John Josse Vandermoere related the following tale.

WOLFERT WEBBER, OR GOLDEN DREAMS.

IN the year of grace one thousand seven hundred and—blank —for I do not remember the precise date; however, it was somewhere in the early part of the last century,—there lived in the ancient city of the Manhattoes a worthy burgher, Wolfert Webber

[1] A tale in Irving's Bracebridge Hall.

by name. He was descended from old Cobus Webber of the Brill[1] in Holland, one of the original settlers, famous for introducing the cultivation of cabbages, and who came over to the province during the protectorship of Oloffe Van Kortlandt,[2] otherwise called "the Dreamer."

The field in which Cobus Webber first planted himself and his cabbages had remained ever since in the family, who continued in the same line of husbandry with that praiseworthy perseverance for which our Dutch burghers are noted. The whole family genius, during several generations, was devoted to the study and development of this one noble vegetable, and to this concentration of intellect may doubtless be ascribed the prodigious renown to which the Webber cabbages attained.

The Webber dynasty continued in uninterrupted succession, and never did a line give more unquestionable proofs of legitimacy. The eldest son succeeded to the looks as well as the territory of his sire, and had the portraits of this line of tranquil potentates been taken, they would have presented a row of heads marvelously resembling, in shape and magnitude, the vegetables over which they reigned.

The seat of government continued unchanged in the family mansion,—a Dutch-built house, with a front, or rather gable end, of yellow brick, tapering to a point, with the customary iron weathercock at the top. Everything about the building bore the air of long-settled ease and security. Flights of martins peopled the little coops nailed against its walls, and swallows built their nests under the eaves, and every one knows that these house-loving birds bring good luck to the dwelling where they take up their abode. In a bright summer morning in early summer, it was delectable to hear their cheerful notes as they sported about in the pure, sweet air, chirping forth, as it were, the greatness and prosperity of the Webbers.

[1] The Brill is a fortified seaport of Holland, on the Meuse River, near Rotterdam.

[2] See Note 1, p. 336.

Thus quietly and comfortably did this excellent family vegetate under the shade of a mighty buttonwood tree, which by little and little grew so great as entirely to overshadow their palace. The city gradually spread its suburbs round their domain. Houses sprang up to interrupt their prospects. The rural lanes in the vicinity began to grow into the bustle and populousness of streets; in short, with all the habits of rustic life they began to find themselves the inhabitants of a city. Still, however, they maintained their hereditary character and hereditary possessions, with all the tenacity of petty German princes in the midst of the empire. Wolfert was the last of the line, and succeeded to the patriarchal bench at the door, under the family tree, and swayed the scepter of his fathers,—a kind of rural potentate in the midst of the metropolis.

To share the cares and sweets of sovereignty he had taken unto himself a helpmate, one of that excellent kind called "stirring women;" that is to say, she was one of those notable little housewives who are always busy where there is nothing to do. Her activity, however, took one particular direction,—her whole life seemed devoted to intense knitting; whether at home or abroad, walking or sitting, her needles were continually in motion, and it is even affirmed that by her unwearied industry she very nearly supplied her household with stockings throughout the year. This worthy couple were blessed with one daughter, who was brought up with great tenderness and care; uncommon pains had been taken with her education, so that she could stitch in every variety of way, make all kinds of pickles and preserves, and mark her own name on a sampler. The influence of her taste was seen also in the family garden, where the ornamental began to mingle with the useful; whole rows of fiery marigolds and splendid hollyhocks bordered the cabbage beds, and gigantic sunflowers lolled their broad, jolly faces over the fences, seeming to ogle most affectionately the passers-by.

Thus reigned and vegetated Wolfert Webber over his paternal acres, peacefully and contentedly. Not but that, like all other

sovereigns, he had his occasional cares and vexations. The growth of his native city sometimes caused him annoyance. His little territory gradually became hemmed in by streets and houses, which intercepted air and sunshine. He was now and then subjected to the irruptions of the border population that infest the streets of a metropolis, who would make midnight forays into his dominions, and carry off captive whole platoons of his noblest subjects. Vagrant swine would make a descent, too, now and then, when the gate was left open, and lay all waste before them; and mischievous urchins would decapitate the illustrious sunflowers, the glory of the garden, as they lolled their heads so fondly over the walls. Still all these were petty grievances, which might now and then ruffle the surface of his mind, as a summer breeze will ruffle the surface of a mill pond, but they could not disturb the deep-seated quiet of his soul. He would but seize a trusty staff that stood behind the door, issue suddenly out, and anoint the back of the aggressor, whether pig or urchin, and then return within doors, marvelously refreshed and tranquilized.

The chief cause of anxiety to honest Wolfert, however, was the growing prosperity of the city. The expenses of living doubled and trebled, but he could not double and treble the magnitude of his cabbages, and the number of competitors prevented the increase of price; thus, therefore, while every one around him grew richer, Wolfert grew poorer, and he could not, for the life of him, perceive how the evil was to be remedied.

This growing care, which increased from day to day, had its gradual effect upon our worthy burgher, insomuch that it at length implanted two or three wrinkles in his brow, things unknown before in the family of the Webbers, and it seemed to pinch up the corners of his cocked hat into an expression of anxiety totally opposite to the tranquil, broad-brimmed, low-crowned beavers of his illustrious progenitors.

Perhaps even this would not have materially disturbed the serenity of his mind had he had only himself and his wife to

care for; but there was his daughter gradually growing to maturity, and all the world knows that when daughters begin to ripen, no fruit nor flower requires so much looking after. I have no talent at describing female charms, else fain would I depict the progress of this little Dutch beauty: how her blue eyes grew deeper and deeper, and her cherry lips redder and redder, and how she ripened and ripened, and rounded and rounded, in the opening breath of sixteen summers, until, in her seventeenth spring, she seemed ready to burst out of her bodice, like a half-blown rosebud.

Ah, well-a-day! Could I but show her as she was then, tricked out on a Sunday morning in the hereditary finery of the old Dutch clothespress, of which her mother had confided to her the key! The wedding dress of her grandmother, modernized for use, with sundry ornaments, handed down as heirlooms in the family. Her pale brown hair smoothed with buttermilk in flat, waving lines on each side of her fair forehead. The chain of yellow, virgin gold that encircled her neck; the little cross that just rested at the entrance of a soft valley of happiness, as if it would sanctify the place. The—but pooh! it is not for an old man like me to be prosing about female beauty; suffice it to say, Amy had attained her seventeenth year. Long since had her sampler exhibited hearts in couples desperately transfixed with arrows, and true lovers' knots worked in deep blue silk, and it was evident she began to languish for some more interesting occupation than the rearing of sunflowers or pickling of cucumbers.

At this critical period of female existence, when the heart within a damsel's bosom, like its emblem, the miniature which hangs without, is apt to be engrossed by a single image, a new visitor began to make his appearance under the roof of Wolfert Webber. This was Dirk Waldron, the only son of a poor widow, but who could boast of more fathers than any lad in the province, for his mother had had four husbands, and this only child, so that, though born in her last wedlock, he might fairly claim to

be the tardy fruit of a long course of cultivation. This son of four fathers united the merits and the vigor of all his sires. If he had not had a great family before him he seemed likely to have a great one after him, for you had only to look at the fresh, buxom youth to see that he was formed to be the founder of a mighty race.

This youngster gradually became an intimate visitor of the family. He talked little, but he sat long. He filled the father's pipe when it was empty, gathered up the mother's knitting needle, or ball of worsted, when it fell to the ground, stroked the sleek coat of the tortoise-shell cat, and replenished the teapot for the daughter from the bright copper kettle that sang before the fire. All these quiet little offices may seem of trifling import, but when true love is translated into Low Dutch it is in this way that it eloquently expresses itself. They were not lost upon the Webber family. The winning youngster found marvelous favor in the eyes of the mother; the tortoise-shell cat, albeit the most staid and demure of her kind, gave indubitable signs of approbation of his visits; the teakettle seemed to sing out a cheering note of welcome at his approach; and if the sly glances of the daughter might be rightly read, as she sat bridling and dimpling, and sewing by her mother's side, she was not a whit behind Dame Webber, or grimalkin, or the teakettle, in good will.

Wolfert alone saw nothing of what was going on. Profoundly wrapt up in meditation on the growth of the city and his cabbages, he sat looking in the fire, and puffing his pipe in silence. One night, however, as the gentle Amy, according to custom, lighted her lover to the outer door, and he, according to custom, took his parting salute, the smack resounded so vigorously through the long, silent entry as to startle even the dull ear of Wolfert. He was slowly roused to a new source of anxiety. It had never entered into his head that this mere child, who, as it seemed, but the other day had been climbing about his knees and playing with dolls and babyhouses, could all at once be thinking of lovers and matrimony. He rubbed his eyes, examined into the fact,

and really found that while he had been dreaming of other matters, she had actually grown to be a woman, and, what was worse, had fallen in love. Here arose new cares for Wolfert. He was a kind father, but he was a prudent man. The young man was a lively, stirring lad, but then he had neither money nor land. Wolfert's ideas all ran in one channel, and he saw no alternative in case of a marriage but to portion off the young couple with a corner of his cabbage garden, the whole of which was barely sufficient for the support of his family.

Like a prudent father, therefore, he determined to nip this passion in the bud, and forbade the youngster the house, though sorely did it go against his fatherly heart, and many a silent tear did it cause in the bright eye of his daughter. She showed herself, however, a pattern of filial piety and obedience. She never pouted and sulked; she never flew in the face of parental authority; she never flew into a passion, nor fell into hysterics, as many romantic, novel-read young ladies would do. Not she, indeed. She was none such heroical, rebellious trumpery, I'll warrant ye. On the contrary, she acquiesced like an obedient daughter, shut the street door in her lover's face, and if ever she did grant him an interview, it was either out of the kitchen window or over the garden fence.

Wolfert was deeply cogitating these matters in his mind, and his brow wrinkled with unusual care, as he wended his way one Saturday afternoon to a rural inn, about two miles from the city. It was a favorite resort of the Dutch part of the community, from being always held by a Dutch line of landlords, and retaining an air and relish of the good old times. It was a Dutch-built house, that had probably been a country seat of some opulent burgher in the early time of the settlement. It stood near a point of land called Corlear's Hook,[1] which stretches out into the Sound, and against which the tide, at its flux and reflux, sets with extraordinary rapidity. The venerable and somewhat crazy

[1] A point of land at the bend of the East River below Grand Street, New York City.

mansion was distinguished from afar by a grove of elms and sycamores that seemed to wave a hospitable invitation, while a few weeping willows, with their dank, drooping foliage, resembling falling waters, gave an idea of coolness that rendered it an attractive spot during the heats of summer.

Here, therefore, as I said, resorted many of the old inhabitants of the Manhattoes, where, while some played at shuffleboard[1] and quoits,[2] and ninepins, others smoked a deliberate pipe, and talked over public affairs.

It was on a blustering autumnal afternoon that Wolfert made his visit to the inn. The grove of elms and willows was stripped of its leaves, which whirled in rustling eddies about the fields. The ninepin alley was deserted, for the premature chilliness of the day had driven the company within doors. As it was Saturday afternoon the habitual club was in session, composed principally of regular Dutch burghers, though mingled occasionally with persons of various character and country, as is natural in a place of such motley population.

Beside the fireplace, in a huge, leather-bottomed armchair, sat the dictator of this little world, the venerable Rem, or, as it was pronounced, "Ramm" Rapelye. He was a man of Walloon[3] race, and illustrious for the antiquity of his line, his great grandmother having been the first white child born in the province. But he was still more illustrious for his wealth and dignity. He had long filled the noble office of alderman, and was a man to whom the governor himself took off his hat. He had maintained possession of the leather-bottomed chair from time immemorial, and had gradually waxed in bulk as he sat in his seat of government,

[1] A game played by pushing or shaking pieces of money or metal so as to make them reach certain marks on a board.

[2] A game played by pitching a flattened, ring-shaped piece of iron, called a quoit, at a fixed object.

[3] A people of French origin, inhabiting the frontiers between France and Flanders. A colony of one hundred and ten Walloons came to New York in 1624.

until in the course of years he filled its whole magnitude. His word was decisive with his subjects, for he was so rich a man that he was never expected to support any opinion by argument. The landlord waited on him with peculiar officiousness, — not that he paid better than his neighbors, but then the coin of a rich man seems always to be so much more acceptable. The landlord had ever a pleasant word and a joke to insinuate in the ear of the august Ramm. It is true Ramm never laughed, and, indeed, ever maintained a mastiff-like gravity and even surliness of aspect; yet he now and then rewarded mine host with a token of approbation, which, though nothing more nor less than a kind of grunt, still delighted the landlord more than a broad laugh from a poorer man.

"This will be a rough night for the money diggers," said mine host, as a gust of wind howled round the house and rattled at the windows.

"What! are they at their works again?" said an English half-pay captain, with one eye, who was a very frequent attendant at the inn.

"Ay are they," said the landlord, "and well may they be. They've had luck of late. They say a great pot of money has been dug up in the fields just behind Stuyvesant's orchard. Folks think it must have been buried there in old times by Peter Stuyvesant, the Dutch governor."

"Fudge!" said the one-eyed man of war, as he added a small portion of water to a bottom of brandy.

"Well, you may believe it or not, as you please," said mine host, somewhat nettled, "but everybody knows that the old governor buried a great deal of his money at the time of the Dutch troubles, when the English redcoats seized on the province. They say, too, the old gentleman walks, ay, and in the very same dress that he wears in the picture that hangs up in the family house."

"Fudge!" said the half-pay officer.

"Fudge, if you please! But didn't Corney Van Zandt see

him at midnight, stalking about in the meadow with his wooden leg, and a drawn sword in his hand, that flashed like fire? And what can he be walking for but because people have been troubling the place where he buried his money in old times?"

Here the landlord was interrupted by several guttural sounds from Ramm Rapelye, betokening that he was laboring with the unusual production of an idea. As he was too great a man to be slighted by a prudent publican, mine host respectfully paused until he should deliver himself. The corpulent frame of this mighty burgher now gave all the symptoms of a volcanic mountain on the point of an eruption. First there was a certain heaving of the abdomen, not unlike an earthquake; then was emitted a cloud of tobacco smoke from that crater, his mouth; then there was a kind of rattle in the throat, as if the idea were working its way up through a region of phlegm; then there were several disjointed members of a sentence thrown out, ending in a cough; at length his voice forced its way into a slow, but absolute tone of a man who feels the weight of his purse, if not of his ideas, every portion of his speech being marked by a testy puff of tobacco smoke.

"Who talks of old Peter Stuyvesant's walking? (puff). Have people no respect for persons? (puff—puff). Peter Stuyvesant knew better what to do with his money than to bury it (puff). I know the Stuyvesant family (puff), every one of them (puff); not a more respectable family in the province (puff)—old standards (puff)—warm householders (puff)—none of your upstarts (puff—puff—puff). Don't talk to me of Peter Stuyvesant's walking (puff—puff—puff—puff)."

Here the redoubtable Ramm contracted his brow, clasped up his mouth till it wrinkled at each corner, and redoubled his smoking with such vehemence that the cloudy volumes soon wreathed round his head, as the smoke envelops the awful summit of Mount Ætna.

A general silence followed the sudden rebuke of this very rich man. The subject, however, was too interesting to be readily

abandoned. The conversation soon broke forth again from the lips of Peechy Prauw Van Hook, the chronicler of the club, one of those prosing, narrative old men who seem to be troubled with an incontinence of words as they grow old.

Peechy could, at any time, tell as many stories in an evening as his hearers could digest in a month. He now resumed the conversation by affirming that, to his knowledge, money had, at different times, been digged up in various parts of the island. The lucky persons who had discovered them had always dreamed of them three times beforehand, and, what was worthy of remark, those treasures had never been found but by some descendant of the good old Dutch families, which clearly proved that they had been buried by Dutchmen in the olden time.

"Fiddlestick with your Dutchmen!" cried the half-pay officer. "The Dutch had nothing to do with them. They were all buried by Kidd the pirate, and his crew."

Here a keynote was touched that roused the whole company. The name of Captain Kidd was like a talisman in those times, and was associated with a thousand marvelous stories.

The half-pay officer took the lead, and in his narrations fathered upon Kidd all the plunderings and exploits of Morgan,[1] Blackbeard,[2] and the whole list of bloody buccaneers.

The officer was a man of great weight among the peaceable members of the club, by reason of his warlike character and gunpowder tales. All his golden stories of Kidd, however, and of the booty he had buried, were obstinately rivaled by the tales of Peechy Prauw, who, rather than suffer his Dutch progenitors to be eclipsed by a foreign freebooter, enriched every field and shore

1 Sir Henry Morgan (1637–90), a noted Welsh buccaneer. He was captured and sent to England for trial, but Charles II., instead of punishing him, knighted him, and subsequently appointed him governor of Jamaica.

2 Edward Teach, one of the most cruel of the pirates, took command of a pirate ship in 1717, and thereafter committed all sorts of atrocities until he was slain by Lieutenant Maynard in 1718. His nickname of "Blackbeard" was given him because of his black beard.

in the neighborhood with the hidden wealth of Peter Stuyvesant and his contemporaries.

Not a word of this conversation was lost upon Wolfert Webber. He returned pensively home, full of magnificent ideas. The soil of his native island seemed to be turned into gold dust, and every field to teem with treasure. His head almost reeled at the thought how often he must have heedlessly rambled over places where countless sums lay, scarcely covered by the turf beneath his feet. His mind was in an uproar with this whirl of new ideas. As he came in sight of the venerable mansion of his forefathers, and the little realm where the Webbers had so long and so contentedly flourished, his gorge rose at the narrowness of his destiny.

"Unlucky Wolfert!" exclaimed he; "others can go to bed and dream themselves into whole mines of wealth; they have but to seize a spade in the morning, and turn up doubloons[1] like potatoes; but thou must dream of hardships, and rise to poverty, must dig thy field from year's end to year's end, and yet raise nothing but cabbages!"

Wolfert Webber went to bed with a heavy heart, and it was long before the golden visions that disturbed his brain permitted him to sink into repose. The same visions, however, extended into his sleeping thoughts, and assumed a more definite form. He dreamed that he had discovered an immense treasure in the center of his garden. At every stroke of the spade he laid bare a golden ingot; diamond crosses sparkled out of the dust; bags of money turned up their bellies, corpulent with pieces-of-eight[2] or venerable doubloons; and chests wedged close with moidores,[3] ducats,[4] and pistareens,[5] yawned before his ravished eyes, and vomited forth their glittering contents.

[1] Spanish gold coins, equivalent to $15.60.
[2] Spanish coins, worth about $1 each.
[3] Portuguese gold coins, valued at $6.50.
[4] Coins of gold and silver, valued at $2 and $1 respectively.
[5] Spanish silver coins, worth about $.20.

Wolfert awoke a poorer man than ever. He had no heart to go about his daily concerns, which appeared so paltry and profitless, but sat all day long in the chimney corner, picturing to himself ingots and heaps of gold in the fire. The next night his dream was repeated. He was again in his garden digging, and laying open stores of hidden wealth. There was something very singular in this repetition. He passed another day of reverie, and though it was cleaning day, and the house, as usual in Dutch households, completely topsy-turvy, yet he sat unmoved amidst the general uproar.

The third night he went to bed with a palpitating heart. He put on his red nightcap wrong side outwards, for good luck. It was deep midnight before his anxious mind could settle itself into sleep. Again the golden dream was repeated, and again he saw his garden teeming with ingots and money bags.

Wolfert rose the next morning in complete bewilderment. A dream, three times repeated, was never known to lie, and if so, his fortune was made.

In his agitation he put on his waistcoat with the hind part before, and this was a corroboration of good luck.[1] He no longer doubted that a huge store of money lay buried somewhere in his cabbage field, coyly waiting to be sought for, and he repined at having so long been scratching about the surface of the soil instead of digging to the center.

He took his seat at the breakfast table, full of these speculations, asked his daughter to put a lump of gold into his tea, and on handing his wife a plate of slapjacks, begged her to help herself to a doubloon.

His grand care now was how to secure this immense treasure without its being known. Instead of his working regularly in his grounds in the daytime, he now stole from his bed at night, and with spade and pickax went to work to rip up and dig about

[1] It is an old superstition that to put on one's clothes wrong side out forebodes good luck.

his paternal acres, from one end to the other. In a little time the whole garden, which had presented such a goodly and regular appearance, with its phalanx of cabbages, like a vegetable army in battle array, was reduced to a scene of devastation, while the relentless Wolfert, with nightcap on head and lantern and spade in hand, stalked through the slaughtered ranks, the destroying angel of his own vegetable world.

Every morning bore testimony to the ravages of the preceding night in cabbages of all ages and conditions, from the tender sprout to the full-grown head, piteously rooted from their quiet beds like worthless weeds, and left to wither in the sunshine. In vain Wolfert's wife remonstrated; in vain his darling daughter wept over the destruction of some favorite marigold. "Thou shalt have gold of another-guess[1] sort," he would cry, chucking her under the chin; "thou shalt have a string of crooked ducats for thy wedding necklace, my child." His family began really to fear that the poor man's wits were diseased. He muttered in his sleep at night about mines of wealth, about pearls and diamonds, and bars of gold. In the daytime he was moody and abstracted, and walked about as if in a trance. Dame Webber held frequent councils with all the old women of the neighborhood; scarce an hour in the day but a knot of them might be seen wagging their white caps together round her door, while the poor woman made some piteous recital. The daughter, too, was fain to seek for more frequent consolation from the stolen interviews of her favored swain, Dirk Waldron. The delectable little Dutch songs with which she used to dulcify the house grew less and less frequent, and she would forget her sewing, and look wistfully in her father's face as he sat pondering by the fireside. Wolfert caught her eye one day fixed on him thus anxiously, and for a moment was roused from his golden reveries. "Cheer up, my girl," said he exultingly; "why dost thou droop? Thou

[1] A corruption of the old expression "another-gates," or "of another gate," meaning "of another way or manner;" hence, "of another kind."

shalt hold up thy head one day with the Brinckerhoffs, and the Schermerhorns, the Van Hornes, and the Van Dams.[1] By St. Nicholas, but the patroon[2] himself shall be glad to get thee for his son!"

Amy shook her head at his vainglorious boast, and was more than ever in doubt of the soundness of the good man's intellect.

In the mean time Wolfert went on digging and digging; but the field was extensive, and as his dream had indicated no precise spot, he had to dig at random. The winter set in before one tenth of the scene of promise had been explored.

The ground became frozen hard, and the nights too cold for the labors of the spade.

No sooner, however, did the returning warmth of spring loosen the soil, and the small frogs begin to pipe in the meadows, but Wolfert resumed his labors with renovated zeal. Still, however, the hours of industry were reversed.

Instead of working cheerily all day, planting and setting out his vegetables, he remained thoughtfully idle, until the shades of night summoned him to his secret labors. In this way he continued to dig from night to night, and week to week, and month to month, but not a stiver[3] did he find. On the contrary, the more he digged the poorer he grew. The rich soil of his garden was digged away, and the sand and gravel from beneath was thrown to the surface, until the whole field presented an aspect of sandy barrenness.

In the mean time, the seasons gradually rolled on. The little frogs which had piped in the meadows in early spring croaked as bullfrogs during the summer heats, and then sank into silence.

[1] Names of rich and influential Dutch families in the old Dutch colony of New Amsterdam.

[2] The patroons were members of the Dutch West India Company, who purchased land in New Netherlands of the Indians, and after fulfilling certain conditions imposed with a view to colonizing their territory, enjoyed feudal rights similar to those of the barons of the middle ages.

[3] A Dutch coin, worth about two cents; hence, anything of little worth.

The peach tree budded, blossomed, and bore its fruit. The swallows and martins came, twittered about the roof, built their nests, reared their young, held their congress along the eaves, and then winged their flight in search of another spring. The caterpillar spun its winding sheet, dangled in it from the great buttonwood tree before the house, turned into a moth, fluttered with the last sunshine of summer, and disappeared; and finally the leaves of the buttonwood tree turned yellow, then brown, then rustled one by one to the ground, and whirling about in little eddies of wind and dust, whispered that winter was at hand.

Wolfert gradually woke from his dream of wealth as the year declined. He had reared no crop for the supply of his household during the sterility of winter. The season was long and severe, and for the first time the family was really straitened in its comforts. By degrees a revulsion of thought took place in Wolfert's mind, common to those whose golden dreams have been disturbed by pinching realities. The idea gradually stole upon him that he should come to want. He already considered himself one of the most unfortunate men in the province, having lost such an incalculable amount of undiscovered treasure, and now, when thousands of pounds had eluded his search, to be perplexed for shillings and pence was cruel in the extreme.

Haggard care gathered about his brow; he went about with a money-seeking air, his eyes bent downwards into the dust, and carrying his hands in his pockets, as men are apt to do when they have nothing else to put into them. He could not even pass the city almshouse without giving it a rueful glance, as if destined to be his future abode.

The strangeness of his conduct and of his looks occasioned much speculation and remark. For a long time he was suspected of being crazy, and then everybody pitied him; and at length it began to be suspected that he was poor, and then everybody avoided him.

The rich old burghers of his acquaintance met him outside

of the door when he called, entertained him hospitably on the threshold, pressed him warmly by the hand at parting, shook their heads as he walked away, with the kind-hearted expression of "poor Wolfert," and turned a corner nimbly if by chance they saw him approaching as they walked the streets. Even the barber and the cobbler of the neighborhood, and a tattered tailor in an alley hard by, three of the poorest and merriest rogues in the world, eyed him with that abundant sympathy which usually attends a lack of means, and there is not a doubt but their pockets would have been at his command, only that they happened to be empty.

Thus everybody deserted the Webber mansion, as if poverty were contagious, like the plague — everybody but honest Dirk Waldron, who still kept up his stolen visits to the daughter, and indeed seemed to wax more affectionate as the fortunes of his mistress were on the wane.

Many months had elapsed since Wolfert had frequented his old resort, the rural inn. He was taking a long, lonely walk one Saturday afternoon, musing over his wants and disappointments, when his feet took instinctively their wonted direction, and on awaking out of a reverie, he found himself before the door of the inn. For some moments he hesitated whether to enter, but his heart yearned for companionship, and where can a ruined man find better companionship than at a tavern, where there is neither sober example nor sober advice to put him out of countenance?

Wolfert found several of the old frequenters of the inn at their usual posts and seated in their usual places; but one was missing, the great Ramm Rapelye, who for many years had filled the leather-bottomed chair of state. His place was supplied by a stranger, who seemed, however, completely at home in the chair and the tavern. He was rather under size, but deep-chested, square, and muscular. His broad shoulders, double joints, and bow knees gave tokens of prodigious strength His face was dark and weather-beaten; a deep scar, as if from the slash of a cutlass, had almost divided his nose, and made a gash in his

upper lip, through which his teeth shone like a bulldog's. A mop of iron gray hair gave a grisly finish to this hard-favored visage. His dress was of an amphibious character. He wore an old hat edged with tarnished lace, and cocked in martial style on one side of his head; a rusty[1] blue military coat with brass buttons; and a wide pair of short petticoat trousers,—or rather breeches, for they were gathered up at the knees. He ordered everybody about him with an authoritative air, talking in a brattling[2] voice that sounded like the crackling of thorns under a pot, d—d the landlord and servants with perfect impunity, and was waited upon with greater obsequiousness than had ever been shown to the mighty Ramm himself.

Wolfert's curiosity was awakened to know who and what was this stranger who had thus usurped absolute sway in this ancient domain. Peechy Prauw took him aside into a remote corner of the hall, and there, in an under voice and with great caution, imparted to him all that he knew on the subject. The inn had been aroused several months before, on a dark, stormy night, by repeated long shouts that seemed like the howlings of a wolf. They came from the water side, and at length were distinguished to be hailing the house in the seafaring manner, "House ahoy!" The landlord turned out with his head waiter, tapster, hostler, and errand boy—that is to say, with his old negro Cuff. On approaching the place whence the voice proceeded, they found this amphibious-looking personage at the water's edge, quite alone, and seated on a great oaken sea chest. How he came there,—whether he had been set on shore from some boat, or had floated to land on his chest,—nobody could tell, for he did not seem disposed to answer questions, and there was something in his looks and manners that put a stop to all questioning. Suffice it to say, he took possession of a corner room of the inn, to which his chest was removed with great difficulty. Here he had remained ever since, keeping about the inn and its vicinity. Sometimes, it is true, he disappeared for one, two, or three days at a

[1] Shabby. [2] Noisy.

time, going and returning without giving any notice or account of his movements. He always appeared to have plenty of money, though often of very strange, outlandish coinage, and he regularly paid his bill every evening before turning in.

He had fitted up his room to his own fancy, having slung a hammock from the ceiling instead of a bed, and decorated the walls with rusty pistols and cutlasses of foreign workmanship. A greater part of his time was passed in this room, seated by the window, which commanded a wide view of the Sound, a short, old-fashioned pipe in his mouth, a glass of rum toddy[1] at his elbow, and a pocket telescope in his hand, with which he reconnoitered every boat that moved upon the water. Large square-rigged vessels seemed to excite but little attention; but the moment he descried anything with a shoulder-of-mutton[2] sail, or that a barge or yawl or jolly-boat hove in sight, up went the telescope, and he examined it with the most scrupulous attention.

All this might have passed without much notice, for in those times the province was so much the resort of adventurers of all characters and climes that any oddity in dress or behavior attracted but small attention. In a little while, however, this strange sea monster, thus strangely cast upon dry land, began to encroach upon the long established customs and customers of the place, and to interfere in a dictatorial manner in the affairs of the ninepin alley and the barroom, until in the end he usurped an absolute command over the whole inn. It was all in vain to attempt to withstand his authority. He was not exactly quarrelsome, but boisterous and peremptory, like one accustomed to tyrannize on a quarter-deck; and there was a dare-devil[3] air about everything he said and did that inspired wariness in all bystanders. Even the half-pay officer, so long the hero of the club, was soon silenced by him, and the quiet burghers stared with wonder at seeing their inflammable man of war so readily and quietly extinguished.

1 A mixture of rum and hot water sweetened.

2 Triangular. 3 Reckless.

And then the tales that he would tell were enough to make a peaceable man's hair stand on end. There was not a sea fight, nor marauding nor freebooting adventure that had happened within the last twenty years, but he seemed perfectly versed in it. He delighted to talk of the exploits of the buccaneers in the West Indies and on the Spanish Main.[1] How his eyes would glisten as he described the waylaying of treasure ships; the desperate fights, yardarm and yardarm,[2] broadside and broadside;[3] the boarding and capturing huge Spanish galleons! With what chuckling relish would he describe the descent upon some rich Spanish colony, the rifling of a church, the sacking of a convent! You would have thought you heard some gormandizer dilating upon the roasting of a savory goose at Michaelmas,[4] as he described the roasting of some Spanish don to make him discover his treasure,—a detail given with a minuteness that made every rich old burgher present turn uncomfortably in his chair. All this would be told with infinite glee, as if he considered it an excellent joke, and then he would give such a tyrannical leer in the face of his next neighbor that the poor man would be fain to laugh out of sheer faint-heartedness. If any one, however, pretended to contradict him in any of his stories, he was on fire in an instant. His very cocked hat assumed a momentary fierceness, and seemed to resent the contradiction. "How the devil should you know as well as I? I tell you it was as I say;" and he would at the same time let slip a broadside of thundering

[1] The coast of the northern part of South America along the Caribbean Sea, the route formerly traversed by the Spanish treasure ships between the Old and New Worlds.

[2] Ships are said to be yardarm and yardarm when so near as to touch or interlock their yards, which are the long pieces of timber designed to support and extend the square sails.

[3] "Broadside and broadside," i.e., with the side of one ship touching that of another.

[4] The Feast of the Archangel Michael, a church festival celebrated on Sept. 29.

oaths [1] and tremendous sea phrases, such as had never been heard before within these peaceful walls.

Indeed, the worthy burghers began to surmise that he knew more of those stories than mere hearsay. Day after day their conjectures concerning him grew more and more wild and fearful. The strangeness of his arrival, the strangeness of his manners, the mystery that surrounded him, — all made him something incomprehensible in their eyes. He was a kind of monster of the deep to them; he was a merman, he was a behemoth, he was a leviathan, — in short, they knew not what he was.

The domineering spirit of this boisterous sea urchin at length grew quite intolerable. He was no respecter of persons; he contradicted the richest burghers without hesitation; he took possession of the sacred elbowchair, which time out of mind had been the seat of sovereignty of the illustrious Ramm Rapelye. Nay, he even went so far, in one of his rough, jocular moods, as to slap that mighty burgher on the back, drink his toddy, and wink in his face, — a thing scarcely to be believed. From this time Ramm Rapelye appeared no more at the inn. His example was followed by several of the most eminent customers, who were too rich to tolerate being bullied out of their opinions or being obliged to laugh at another man's jokes. The landlord was almost in despair; but he knew not how to get rid of this sea monster and his sea chest, who seemed both to have grown like fixtures, or excrescences, on his establishment.

Such was the account whispered cautiously in Wolfert's ear by the narrator, Peechy Prauw, as he held him by the button in a corner of the hall, casting a wary glance now and then towards the door of the barroom, lest he should be overheard by the terrible hero of his tale.

Wolfert took his seat in a remote part of the room in silence, impressed with profound awe of this unknown, so versed in freebooting history. It was to him a wonderful instance of the revolutions of mighty empires, to find the venerable Ramm Rapelye

[1] "Broadside of thundering oaths," i.e., a volley of abuse.

thus ousted from the throne, and a rugged tarpaulin[1] dictating from his elbowchair, hectoring the patriarchs, and filling this tranquil little realm with brawl and bravado.

The stranger was, on this evening, in a more than usually communicative mood, and was narrating a number of astounding stories of plunderings and burnings on the high seas. He dwelt upon them with peculiar relish, heightening the frightful particulars in proportion to their effect on his peaceful auditors. He gave a swaggering detail of the capture of a Spanish merchantman. She was lying becalmed during a long summer's day, just off from the island which was one of the lurking places of the pirates. They had reconnoitered her with their spyglasses from the shore, and ascertained her character and force. At night a picked crew of daring fellows set off for her in a whaleboat. They approached with muffled oars, as she lay rocking idly with the undulations of the sea, and her sails flapping against the masts. They were close under the stern before the guard on deck was aware of their approach. The alarm was given; the pirates threw hand grenades[2] on deck, and sprang up the main chains,[3] sword in hand.

The crew flew to arms, but in great confusion; some were shot down, others took refuge in the tops, others were driven overboard and drowned, while others fought hand to hand from the main deck to the quarter-deck, disputing gallantly every inch of ground. There were three Spanish gentlemen on board, with their ladies, who made the most desperate resistance. They defended the companion way,[4] cut down several of their assailants, and fought like very devils, for they were maddened by the shrieks of the ladies from the cabin. One of the dons was old, and

[1] A kind of canvas used about a ship; hence, a sailor.

[2] "Hand grenades," i.e., small shells of iron or glass filled with gunpowder and thrown by hand.

[3] "Main chains," i.e., strong bars of iron bolted at the lower end to the side of a vessel, and secured at the upper end to the iron straps of the blocks by which the shrouds supporting the masts are extended.

[4] The companion way is a staircase leading to the cabin of a ship.

soon dispatched. The other two kept their ground vigorously, even though the captain of the pirates was among their assailants. Just then there was a shout of victory from the main deck. "The ship is ours!" cried the pirates.

One of the dons immediately dropped his sword and surrendered; the other, who was a hot-headed youngster, and just married, gave the captain a slash in the face that laid all open. The captain just made out to articulate the words, "No quarter."

"And what did they do with their prisoners?" said Peechy Prauw eagerly.

"Threw them all overboard," was the answer. A dead pause followed the reply. Peechy Prauw sank quietly back, like a man who had unwarily stolen upon the lair of a sleeping lion. The honest burghers cast fearful glances at the deep scar slashed across the visage of the stranger, and moved their chairs a little farther off. The seaman, however, smoked on without moving a muscle, as though he either did not perceive, or did not regard, the unfavorable effect he had produced upon his hearers.

The half-pay officer was the first to break the silence, for he was continually tempted to make ineffectual head against this tyrant of the seas, and to regain his lost consequence in the eyes of his ancient companions. He now tried to match the gunpowder tales of the stranger by others equally tremendous. Kidd, as usual, was his hero, concerning whom he seemed to have picked up many of the floating traditions of the province. The seaman had always evinced a settled pique against the one-eyed warrior. On this occasion he listened with peculiar impatience. He sat with one arm akimbo, the other elbow on the table, the hand holding on to the small pipe he was pettishly puffing, his legs crossed, drumming with one foot on the ground, and casting every now and then the side glance of a basilisk at the prosing captain. At length the latter spoke of Kidd's having ascended the Hudson with some of his crew, to land his plunder in secrecy.

"Kidd up the Hudson!" burst forth the seaman, with a tremendous oath; "Kidd never was up the Hudson!"

"I tell you he was," said the other. "Ay, and they say he buried a quantity of treasure on the little flat that runs out into the river, called the Devil's Dans Kammer."[1]

"The Devil's Dans Kammer in your teeth!"[2] cried the seaman. "I tell you Kidd never was up the Hudson. What a plague do you know of Kidd and his haunts?"

"What do I know?" echoed the half-pay officer. "Why, I was in London at the time of his trial; ay, and I had the pleasure of seeing him hanged at Execution Dock."

"Then, sir, let me tell you that you saw as pretty a fellow hanged as ever trod shoe leather. Ay!" putting his face nearer to that of the officer, "and there was many a landlubber[3] looked on that might much better have swung in his stead."

The half-pay officer was silenced; but the indignation thus pent up in his bosom glowed with intense vehemence in his single eye, which kindled like a coal.

Peechy Prauw, who never could remain silent, observed that the gentleman certainly was in the right. Kidd never did bury money up the Hudson, nor indeed in any of those parts, though many affirmed such to be the fact. It was Bradish[4] and others of the buccaneers who had buried money, some said in Turtle Bay,[5] others on Long Island, others in the neighborhood of Hell Gate. "Indeed," added he, "I recollect an adventure of Sam, the negro fisherman, many years ago, which some think had some-

[1] A huge, flat rock, projecting into the Hudson River above the Highlands.

[2] "In your teeth," a phrase to denote direct opposition or defiance.

[3] A term of contempt used by seamen for those who pass their lives on land.

[4] Bradish was a pirate whose actions were blended in the popular mind with those of Kidd. He was boatswain of a ship which sailed from England in 1697, and which, like Kidd's, bore the name of the *Adventure*. In the absence of the captain on shore, he seized the ship and set out on a piratical cruise. After amassing a fortune, he sailed for America and deposited a large amount of his wealth with a confederate on Long Island. He was apprehended in Rhode Island, sent to England, and executed.

[5] A small cove in the East River two miles north of Corlear's Hook.

thing to do with the buccaneers. As we are all friends here, and as it will go no further, I'll tell it to you.

"Upon a dark night many years ago, as Black Sam was returning from fishing in Hell Gate"—

Here the story was nipped in the bud by a sudden movement from the unknown, who, laying his iron fist on the table, knuckles downward, with a quiet force that indented the very boards, and looking grimly over his shoulder, with the grin of an angry bear, —"Hearkee, neighbor," said he, with significant nodding of the head, "you'd better let the buccaneers and their money alone; they're not for old men and old women to meddle with. They fought hard for their money—they gave body and soul for it; and wherever it lies buried, depend upon it he must have a tug with the devil who gets it!"

This sudden explosion was succeeded by a blank silence throughout the room. Peechy Prauw shrunk within himself, and even the one-eyed officer turned pale. Wolfert, who from a dark corner of the room had listened with intense eagerness to all this talk about buried treasure, looked with mingled awe and reverence at this bold buccaneer, for such he really suspected him to be. There was a chinking of gold and a sparkling of jewels in all his stories about the Spanish Main that gave a value to every period, and Wolfert would have given anything for the rummaging of the ponderous sea chest, which his imagination crammed full of golden chalices, crucifixes, and jolly round bags of doubloons.

The dead stillness that had fallen upon the company was at length interrupted by the stranger, who pulled out a prodigious watch of curious and ancient workmanship, and which in Wolfert's eyes had a decidedly Spanish look. On touching a spring, it struck ten o'clock, upon which the sailor called for his reckoning, and having paid it out of a handful of outlandish coin, he drank off the remainder of his beverage, and without taking leave of any one, rolled out of the room, muttering to himself as he stamped upstairs to his chamber.

It was some time before the company could recover from the

silence into which they had been thrown. The very footsteps of the stranger, which were heard now and then as he traversed his chamber, inspired awe.

Still the conversation in which they had been engaged was too interesting not to be resumed. A heavy thunder gust had gathered up unnoticed while they were lost in talk, and the torrents of rain that fell forbade all thoughts of setting off for home until the storm should subside. They drew nearer together, therefore, and entreated the worthy Peechy Prauw to continue the tale which had been so discourteously interrupted. He readily complied, whispering, however, in a tone scarcely above his breath, and drowned occasionally by the rolling of the thunder; and he would pause every now and then and listen, with evident awe, as he heard the heavy footsteps of the stranger pacing overhead. The following is the purport of his story.

ADVENTURE OF THE BLACK FISHERMAN.

EVERYBODY knows Black Sam, the old negro fisherman, or, as he is commonly called, "Mud Sam," who has fished about the Sound for the last half century. It is now many years since Sam, who was then as active a young negro as any in the province, and worked on the farm of Killian Suydam on Long Island, having finished his day's work at an early hour, was fishing, one still summer evening, just about the neighborhood of Hell Gate.

He was in a light skiff, and being well acquainted with the currents and eddies, had shifted his station, according to the shifting of the tide, from the Hen and Chickens to the Hog's Back, from the Hog's Back to the Pot, and from the Pot to the Frying Pan; [1] but in the eagerness of his sport he did not see that the tide was rapidly ebbing, until the roaring of the whirlpools and

[1] See Note 2, p. 336.

eddies warned him of his danger, and he had some difficulty in shooting his skiff from among the rocks and breakers, and getting to the point of Blackwell's Island.[1] Here he cast anchor for some time, waiting the turn of the tide to enable him to return homewards. As the night set in, it grew blustering and gusty. Dark clouds came bundling up in the west, and now and then a growl of thunder or a flash of lightning told that a summer storm was at hand. Sam pulled over, therefore, under the lee of Manhattan Island, and, coasting along, came to a snug nook, just under a steep, beetling rock, where he fastened his skiff to the root of a tree that shot out from a cleft, and spread its broad branches like a canopy over the water. The gust came scouring along, the wind threw up the river in white surges, the rain rattled among the leaves, the thunder bellowed worse than that which is now bellowing, the lightning seemed to lick up the surges of the stream; but Sam, snugly sheltered under rock and tree, lay crouching in his skiff, rocking upon the billows until he fell asleep.

When he woke all was quiet. The gust had passed away, and only now and then a faint gleam of lightning in the east showed which way it had gone. The night was dark and moonless, and from the state of the tide Sam concluded it was near midnight. He was on the point of making loose his skiff to return homewards when he saw a light gleaming along the water from a distance, which seemed rapidly approaching. As it drew near he perceived it came from a lantern in the bow of a boat gliding along under shadow of the land. It pulled up in a small cove close to where he was. A man jumped on shore, and searching about with the lantern, exclaimed, "This is the place—here's the iron ring." The boat was then made fast, and the man, returning on board, assisted his comrades in conveying something heavy on shore. As the light gleamed among them, Sam saw that they were five stout, desperate-looking fellows, in red woolen caps,

[1] A long, narrow island in the East River, between New York and Long Island City.

with a leader in a three-cornered hat, and that some of them were armed with dirks, or long knives, and pistols. They talked low to one another, and occasionally in some outlandish tongue which he could not understand.

On landing they made their way among the bushes, taking turns to relieve each other in lugging their burden up the rocky bank. Sam's curiosity was now fully aroused, so leaving his skiff he clambered silently up a ridge that overlooked their path. They had stopped to rest for a moment, and the leader was looking about among the bushes with his lantern. "Have you brought the spades?" said one. "They are here," replied another, who had them on his shoulder. "We must dig deep, where there will be no risk of discovery," said a third.

A cold chill ran through Sam's veins. He fancied he saw before him a gang of murderers, about to bury their victim. His knees smote together. In his agitation he shook the branch of a tree with which he was supporting himself as he looked over the edge of the cliff.

"What's that?" cried one of the gang. "Some one stirs among the bushes!"

The lantern was held up in the direction of the noise. One of the red-caps cocked a pistol, and pointed it towards the very place where Sam was standing. He stood motionless, breathless, expecting the next moment to be his last. Fortunately his dingy complexion was in his favor, and made no glare among the leaves.

"'Tis no one," said the man with the lantern. "What a plague! you would not fire off your pistol and alarm the country!"

The pistol was uncocked, the burden was resumed, and the party slowly toiled along the bank. Sam watched them as they went, the light sending back fitful gleams through the dripping bushes, and it was not till they were fairly out of sight that he ventured to draw breath freely. He now thought of getting back to his boat, and making his escape out of the reach of such dangerous neighbors; but curiosity was all-powerful. He hesi-

tated, and lingered, and listened. By and by he heard the strokes of spades. "They are digging the grave!" said he to himself, and the cold sweat started upon his forehead. Every stroke of a spade, as it sounded through the silent groves, went to his heart. It was evident there was as little noise made as possible; everything had an air of terrible mystery and secrecy. Sam had a great relish for the horrible; a tale of murder was a treat for him, and he was a constant attendant at executions. He could not resist an impulse, in spite of every danger, to steal nearer to the scene of mystery, and overlook the midnight fellows at their work. He crawled along cautiously, therefore, inch by inch, stepping with the utmost care among the dry leaves, lest their rustling should betray him. He came at length to where a steep rock intervened between him and the gang, for he saw the light of their lantern shining up against the branches of the trees on the other side. Sam slowly and silently clambered up the surface of the rock, and raising his head above its naked edge, beheld the villains immediately below him, and so near that though he dreaded discovery he dared not withdraw lest the least movement should be heard. In this way he remained, with his round black face peering above the edge of the rock, like the sun just emerging above the edge of the horizon, or the round-cheeked moon on the dial of a clock.

The red-caps had nearly finished their work, the grave was filled up, and they were carefully replacing the turf. This done they scattered dry leaves over the place. "And now," said the leader, "I defy the devil himself to find it out."

"The murderers!" exclaimed Sam involuntarily.

The whole gang started, and looking up beheld the round black head of Sam just above them, his white eyes strained half out of their orbits, his white teeth chattering, and his whole visage shining with cold perspiration.

"We're discovered!" cried one.

"Down with him!" cried another.

Sam heard the cocking of a pistol, but did not pause for the

report. He scrambled over rock and stone, through brush and brier, rolled down banks like a hedgehog, scrambled up others like a catamount. In every direction he heard some one or other of the gang hemming him in. At length he reached the rocky ridge along the river; one of the red-caps was hard behind him. A steep rock like a wall rose directly in his way; it seemed to cut off all retreat, when fortunately he espied the strong, cord-like branch of a grapevine reaching half way down it. He sprang at it with the force of a desperate man, seized it with both hands, and, being young and agile, succeeded in swinging himself to the summit of the cliff. Here he stood in full relief against the sky, when the red-cap cocked his pistol and fired. The ball whistled by Sam's head. With the lucky thought of a man in an emergency, he uttered a yell, fell to the ground, and detached at the same time a fragment of the rock, which tumbled with a loud splash into the river.

"I've done his business," said the red-cap to one or two of his comrades as they arrived panting. "He'll tell no tales, except to the fishes in the river."

His pursuers now turned to meet their companions. Sam, sliding silently down the surface of the rock, let himself quietly into his skiff, cast loose the fastening, and abandoned himself to the rapid current, which in that place runs like a mill stream, and soon swept him off from the neighborhood. It was not, however, until he had drifted a great distance that he ventured to ply his oars, when he made his skiff dart like an arrow through the strait of Hell Gate, never heeding the danger of Pot, Frying Pan, nor Hog's Back itself, nor did he feel himself thoroughly secure until safely nestled in bed in the cockloft of the ancient farmhouse of the Suydams.

Here the worthy Peechy Prauw paused to take breath, and to take a sip of the gossip tankard that stood at his elbow. His auditors remained with open mouths and outstretched necks, gaping like a nest of swallows for an additional mouthful.

"And is that all?" exclaimed the half-pay officer.

"That's all that belongs to the story," said Peechy Prauw.

"And did Sam never find out what was buried by the red-caps?" said Wolfert eagerly, whose mind was haunted by nothing but ingots and doubloons.

"Not that I know of," said Peechy; "he had no time to spare from his work, and, to tell the truth, he did not like to run the risk of another race among the rocks. Besides, how should he recollect the spot where the grave had been digged? everything would look so different by daylight. And then, where was the use of looking for a dead body when there was no chance of hanging the murderers?"

"Ay, but are you sure it was a dead body they buried?" said Wolfert.

"To be sure," cried Peechy Prauw exultingly. "Does it not haunt in the neighborhood to this very day?"

"Haunts!" exclaimed several of the party, opening their eyes still wider, and edging their chairs still closer.

"Ay, haunts," repeated Peechy; "have none of you heard of Father Red-cap, who haunts the old burned farmhouse in the woods, on the border of the Sound, near Hell Gate?"

"Oh, to be sure, I've heard tell of something of the kind, but then I took it for some old wives' fable."

"Old wives' fable or not," said Peechy Prauw, "that farmhouse stands hard by the very spot. It's been unoccupied time out of mind, and stands in a lonely part of the coast, but those who fish in the neighborhood have often heard strange noises there, and lights have been seen about the wood at night, and an old fellow in a red cap has been seen at the windows more than once, which people take to be the ghost of the body buried there. Once upon a time three soldiers took shelter in the building for the night, and rummaged it from top to bottom, when they found old Father Red-cap astride of a cider barrel in the cellar, with a jug in one hand and a goblet in the other. He offered them a drink out of his goblet, but just as one of the soldiers

was putting it to his mouth — whew! — a flash of fire blazed through the cellar, blinded every mother's son of them for several minutes, and when they recovered their eyesight, jug, goblet, and Red-cap had vanished, and nothing but the empty cider barrel remained."

Here the half-pay officer, who was growing very muzzy and sleepy, and nodding over his liquor, with half extinguished eye, suddenly gleamed up like an expiring rushlight.

"That's all fudge!" said he, as Peechy finished his last story.

"Well, I don't vouch for the truth of it myself," said Peechy Prauw, "though all the world knows that there's something strange about that house and grounds; but as to the story of Mud Sam, I believe it just as well as if it had happened to myself."

The deep interest taken in this conversation by the company had made them unconscious of the uproar abroad among the elements, when suddenly they were electrified by a tremendous clap of thunder. A lumbering crash followed instantaneously, shaking the building to its very foundation. All started from their seats, imagining it the shock of an earthquake, or that old Father Red-cap was coming among them in all his terrors. They listened for a moment, but only heard the rain pelting against the windows and the wind howling among the trees. The explosion was soon explained by the apparition of an old negro's bald head thrust in at the door, his white goggle eyes contrasting with his jetty poll, which was wet with rain, and shone like a bottle. In a jargon but half intelligible he announced that the kitchen chimney had been struck with lightning.

A sullen pause of the storm, which now rose and sank in gusts, produced a momentary stillness. In this interval the report of a musket was heard, and a long shout, almost like a yell, resounded from the shores. Every one crowded to the window; another musket shot was heard, and another long shout, mingled wildly with a rising blast of wind. It seemed as if the cry came up from

the bosom of the waters, for though incessant flashes of lightning spread a light about the shore, no one was to be seen.

Suddenly the window of the room overhead was opened, and a loud halloo uttered by the mysterious stranger. Several hailings passed from one party to the other, but in a language which none of the company in the barroom could understand, and presently they heard the window closed, and a great noise overhead, as if all the furniture were pulled and hauled about the room. The negro servant was summoned, and shortly afterwards was seen assisting the veteran to lug the ponderous sea chest downstairs.

The landlord was in amazement. "What, you are not going on the water in such a storm?"

"Storm!" said the other scornfully, "do you call such a sputter of weather a storm?"

"You'll get drenched to the skin; you'll catch your death!" said Peechy Prauw affectionately.

"Thunder and lightning!" exclaimed the veteran; "don't preach about weather to a man that has cruised in whirlwinds and tornadoes."

The obsequious Peechy was again struck dumb. The voice from the water was heard once more in a tone of impatience; the bystanders stared with redoubled awe at this man of storms, who seemed to have come up out of the deep, and to be summoned back to it again. As, with the assistance of the negro, he slowly bore his ponderous sea chest towards the shore, they eyed it with a superstitious feeling, half doubting whether he were not really about to embark upon it and launch forth upon the wild waves. They followed him at a distance with a lantern.

"Dowse[1] the light!" roared the hoarse voice from the water. "No one wants light here!"

"Thunder and lightning!" exclaimed the veteran, turning short upon them; "back to the house with you!"

Wolfert and his companions shrank back in dismay. Still their

[1] Extinguish.

curiosity would not allow them entirely to withdraw. A long sheet of lightning now flickered across the waves, and discovered a boat, filled with men, just under a rocky point, rising and sinking with the heaving surges, and swashing the waters at every heave. It was with difficulty held to the rocks by a boat hook, for the current rushed furiously round the point. The veteran hoisted one end of the lumbering sea chest on the gunwale of the boat, and seized the handle at the other end to lift it in, when the motion propelled the boat from the shore, the chest slipped off from the gunwale, and, sinking into the waves, pulled the veteran headlong after it. A loud shriek was uttered by all on shore, and a volley of execrations by those on board, but boat and man were hurried away by the rushing swiftness of the tide. A pitchy darkness succeeded. Wolfert Webber, indeed, fancied that he distinguished a cry for help, and that he beheld the drowning man beckoning for assistance; but when the lightning again gleamed along the water all was void; neither man nor boat was to be seen,—nothing but the dashing and weltering of the waves as they hurried past.

The company returned to the tavern to await the subsiding of the storm. They resumed their seats and gazed on each other with dismay. The whole transaction had not occupied five minutes, and not a dozen words had been spoken. When they looked at the oaken chair they could scarcely realize the fact that the strange being who had so lately tenanted it, full of life and Herculean vigor, should already be a corpse. There was the very glass he had just drunk from; there lay the ashes from the pipe which he had smoked, as it were, with his last breath. As the worthy burghers pondered on these things, they felt a terrible conviction of the uncertainty of existence, and each felt as if the ground on which he stood was rendered less stable by his awful example.

As, however, the most of the company were possessed of that valuable philosophy which enables a man to bear up with fortitude against the misfortunes of his neighbors, they soon managed

to console themselves for the tragic end of the veteran. The landlord was particularly happy that the poor dear man had paid his reckoning before he went, and made a kind of farewell speech on the occasion.

"He came," said he, "in a storm, and he went in a storm; he came in the night, and he went in the night; he came nobody knows whence, and he has gone nobody knows where. For aught I know he has gone to sea once more on his chest, and may land to bother some people on the other side of the world; though it's a thousand pities," added he, "if he has gone to Davy Jones's[1] locker, that he had not left his own locker[2] behind him."

"His locker! St. Nicholas preserve us!" cried Peechy Prauw. "I'd not have had that sea chest in the house for any money; I'll warrant he'd come racketing after it at nights, and making a haunted house of the inn. And as to his going to sea in his chest, I recollect what happened to Skipper Onderdonk's ship on his voyage from Amsterdam.

"The boatswain died during a storm, so they wrapped him up in a sheet, and put him in his own sea chest, and threw him overboard; but they neglected, in their hurry-skurry, to say prayers over him, and the storm raged and roared louder than ever, and they saw the dead man seated in his chest, with his shroud for a sail, coming hard after the ship, and the sea breaking before him in great sprays like fire; and there they kept scudding day after day and night after night, expecting every moment to go to wreck; and every night they saw the dead boatswain in his sea chest trying to get up with them, and they heard his whistle above the blasts of wind, and he seemed to send great seas, mountain high, after them that would have swamped the ship if they had not put up the deadlights. And so it went on till they lost sight of him in the fogs off Newfoundland, and supposed he had

[1] Davy Jones is the spirit of the sea, or the sea devil, and Davy Jones's locker is the bottom of the ocean; hence, "gone to Davy Jones's locker" signifies "dead and buried in the sea."

[2] Chest.

veered ship and stood for Dead Man's Isle.[1] So much for burying a man at sea without saying prayers over him."

The thunder gust which had hitherto detained the company was now at an end. The cuckoo clock in the hall told midnight; every one pressed to depart, for seldom was such a late hour of the night trespassed on by these quiet burghers. As they sallied forth they found the heavens once more serene. The storm which had lately obscured them had rolled away, and lay piled up in fleecy masses on the horizon, lighted up by the bright crescent of the moon, which looked like a little silver lamp hung up in a palace of clouds.

The dismal occurrence of the night, and the dismal narrations they had made, had left a superstitious feeling in every mind. They cast a fearful glance at the spot where the buccaneer had disappeared, almost expecting to see him sailing on his chest in the cool moonshine. The trembling rays glittered along the waters, but all was placid, and the current dimpled over the spot where he had gone down. The party huddled together in a little crowd as they repaired homewards, particularly when they passed a lonely field where a man had been murdered, and even the sexton, who had to complete his journey alone, though accustomed, one would think, to ghosts and goblins, went a long way round rather than pass by his own churchyard.

Wolfert Webber had now carried home a fresh stock of stories and notions to ruminate upon. These accounts of pots of money and Spanish treasures, buried here and there and everywhere about the rocks and bays of these wild shores, made him almost dizzy. "Blessed St. Nicholas!" ejaculated he, half aloud, "is it not possible to come upon one of these golden hoards, and to make one's self rich in a twinkling? How hard that I must go on, delving and delving, day in and day out, merely to make a morsel of bread, when one lucky stroke of a spade might enable me to ride in my carriage for the rest of my life!"

[1] Probably Deadman's Point, a small island near Deadman's Bay, off the eastern coast of Newfoundland.

As he turned over in his thoughts all that had been told of the singular adventure of the negro fisherman, his imagination gave a totally different complexion[1] to the tale. He saw in the gang of red-caps nothing but a crew of pirates burying their spoils, and his cupidity was once more awakened by the possibility of at length getting on the traces of some of this lurking wealth. Indeed, his infected fancy tinged everything with gold. He felt like the greedy inhabitant of Bagdad when his eyes had been greased with the magic ointment of the dervish, that gave him to see all the treasures of the earth.[2] Caskets of buried jewels, chests of ingots, and barrels of outlandish coins seemed to court him from their concealments, and supplicate him to relieve them from their untimely graves.

On making private inquiries about the grounds said to be haunted by Father Red-cap, he was more and more confirmed in his surmise. He learned that the place had several times been visited by experienced money diggers who had heard Black Sam's story, though none of them had met with success. On the contrary, they had always been dogged with ill luck of some kind or other, in consequence, as Wolfert concluded, of not going to work at the proper time and with the proper ceremonials. The last attempt had been made by Cobus Quackenbos, who dug for a whole night, and met with incredible difficulty, for as fast as he threw one shovelful of earth out of the hole, two were thrown in by invisible hands. He succeeded so far, however, as to uncover an iron chest, when there was a terrible roaring, ramping, and raging of uncouth figures about the hole, and at length a

[1] Aspect.

[2] See Story of the Blind Man, Baba Abdalla, in Arabian Nights' Entertainment. An inhabitant of Bagdad, Asiatic Turkey, meets with a dervish, or Turkish monk, who presents him with a vast treasure and with a box of magic ointment, which, applied to the left eye, enables one to see the treasures in the bosom of the earth, but on touching the right eye, causes blindness. Having applied it to the left eye with the result predicted, he uses it on his right eye, in the hope that still greater treasures may be revealed, and immediately becomes blind.

shower of blows, dealt by invisible cudgels, fairly belabored him off of the forbidden ground. This Cobus Quackenbos had declared on his deathbed, so that there could not be any doubt of it. He was a man that had devoted many years of his life to money digging, and it was thought would have ultimately succeeded had he not died recently of a brain fever in the almshouse.

Wolfert Webber was now in a worry of trepidation and impatience, fearful lest some rival adventurer should get a scent of the buried gold. He determined privately to seek out the black fisherman, and get him to serve as guide to the place where he had witnessed the mysterious scene of interment. Sam was easily found, for he was one of those old habitual beings that live about a neighborhood until they wear themselves a place in the public mind, and become, in a manner, public characters. There was not an unlucky urchin about town that did not know Sam the fisherman, and think that he had a right to play his tricks upon the old negro. Sam had led an amphibious life for more than half a century, about the shores of the bay and the fishing grounds of the Sound. He passed the greater part of his time on and in the water, particularly about Hell Gate, and might have been taken, in bad weather, for one of the hobgoblins that used to haunt that strait. There would he be seen, at all times and in all weathers, sometimes in his skiff, anchored among the eddies, or prowling like a shark about some wreck, where the fish are supposed to be most abundant; sometimes seated on a rock from hour to hour, looking, in the mist and drizzle, like a solitary heron watching for its prey. He was well acquainted with every hole and corner of the Sound, from the Wallabout[1] to Hell Gate, and from Hell Gate unto the Devil's Stepping-Stones;[2] and it was even affirmed that he knew all the fish in the river by their Christian names.

Wolfert found him at his cabin, which was not much larger than a tolerable dog house. It was rudely constructed of frag-

[1] A bay of the East River, on which the Brooklyn Navy Yard is situated.

[2] See Note 1, p. 338.

ments of wrecks and driftwood, and built on the rocky shore at the foot of the old fort, just about what at present forms the point of the Battery.[1] A "very ancient and fish-like smell"[2] pervaded the place. Oars, paddles, and fishing rods were leaning against the wall of the fort, a net was spread on the sand to dry, a skiff was drawn up on the beach, and at the door of his cabin was Mud Sam himself, indulging in the true negro luxury of sleeping in the sunshine.

Many years had passed away since the time of Sam's youthful adventure, and the snows of many a winter had grizzled the knotty wool upon his head. He perfectly recollected the circumstances, however, for he had often been called upon to relate them, though in his version of the story he differed in many points from Peechy Prauw, as is not infrequently the case with authentic historians. As to the subsequent researches of money diggers, Sam knew nothing about them; they were matters quite out of his line; neither did the cautious Wolfert care to disturb his thoughts on that point. His only wish was to secure the old fisherman as a pilot to the spot, and this was readily effected. The long time that had intervened since his nocturnal adventure had effaced all Sam's awe of the place, and the promise of a trifling reward roused him at once from his sleep and his sunshine.

The tide was adverse to making the expedition by water, and Wolfert was too impatient to get to the land of promise to wait for its turning; they set off, therefore, by land. A walk of four or five miles brought them to the edge of a wood, which at that time covered the greater part of the eastern side of the island. It was just beyond the pleasant region of Bloomen-dael.[3] Here they struck into a long lane, straggling among trees and bushes

[1] The southern extremity of New York City.

[2] See Shakespeare's The Tempest, act ii., sc. 2.

[3] At the time this story was written Bloomen-dael (Flowery Valley) was a village four miles from New York. It is now that part of New York known as Bloomingdale, on the west side, between about Seventieth and One Hundredth Streets.

very much overgrown with weeds and mullein stalks, as if but seldom used, and so completely overshadowed as to enjoy but a kind of twilight. Wild vines entangled the trees and flaunted in their faces; brambles and briers caught their clothes as they passed; the garter snake glided across their path; the spotted toad hopped and waddled before them; and the restless catbird mewed at them from every thicket. Had Wolfert Webber been deeply read in romantic legend he might have fancied himself entering upon forbidden, enchanted ground, or that these were some of the guardians set to keep watch upon buried treasure. As it was, the loneliness of the place, and the wild stories connected with it, had their effect upon his mind.

On reaching the lower end of the lane they found themselves near the shore of the Sound, in a kind of amphitheater surrounded by forest trees. The area had once been a grass plot, but was now shagged with briers and rank weeds. At one end, and just on the river bank, was a ruined building, little better than a heap of rubbish, with a stack of chimneys rising like a solitary tower out of the center. The current of the Sound rushed along just below it, with wildly grown trees drooping their branches into its waves.

Wolfert had not a doubt that this was the haunted house of Father Red-cap, and called to mind the story of Peechy Prauw. The evening was approaching, and the light, falling dubiously among the woody places, gave a melancholy tone to the scene well calculated to foster any lurking feeling of awe or superstition. The night hawk, wheeling about in the highest regions of the air, emitted his peevish, boding cry. The woodpecker gave a lonely tap now and then on some hollow tree, and the firebird[1] streamed by them with his deep red plumage.

They now came to an inclosure that had once been a garden. It extended along the foot of a rocky ridge, but was little better than a wilderness of weeds, with here and there a matted rosebush, or a peach or plum tree, grown wild and ragged, and cov-

[1] Orchard oriole.

ered with moss. At the lower end of the garden they passed a kind of vault in the side of a bank, facing the water. It had the look of a root house.[1] The door, though decayed, was still strong, and appeared to have been recently patched up. Wolfert pushed it open. It gave a harsh grating upon its hinges, and striking against something like a box, a rattling sound ensued, and a skull rolled on the floor. Wolfert drew back shuddering, but was reassured on being informed by the negro that this was a family vault, belonging to one of the old Dutch families that owned this estate, an assertion corroborated by the sight of coffins of various sizes piled within. Sam had been familiar with all these scenes when a boy, and now knew that he could not be far from the place of which they were in quest.

They now made their way to the water's edge, scrambling along ledges of rocks that overhung the waves, and obliged often to hold by shrubs and grapevines to avoid slipping into the deep and hurried stream. At length they came to a small cove, or rather indent of the shore. It was protected by steep rocks, and overshadowed by a thick copse of oaks and chestnuts, so as to be sheltered and almost concealed. The beach shelved gradually within the cove, but the current swept deep and black and rapid along its jutting points. The negro paused, raised his remnant of a hat, and scratched his grizzled poll for a moment, as he regarded this nook; then suddenly clapping his hands, he stepped exultingly forward, and pointed to a large iron ring, stapled firmly in the rock, just where a broad shelf of stone furnished a commodious landing place. It was the very spot where the red-caps had landed. Years had changed the more perishable features of the scene; but rock and iron yield slowly to the influence of time. On looking more closely Wolfert remarked three crosses cut in the rock just above the ring, which had no doubt some mysterious signification. Old Sam now readily recognized the overhanging rock under which his skiff had been sheltered dur-

1 "Root house," i.e., a house for storing up potatoes, turnips, or other roots for the winter feed of cattle.

ing the thunder gust. To follow up the course which the midnight gang had taken, however, was a harder task. His mind had been so much taken up on that eventful occasion by the persons of the drama as to pay but little attention to the scenes, and these places looked so different by night and day. After wandering about for some time, however, they came to an opening among the trees which Sam thought resembled the place. There was a ledge of rock of moderate height, like a wall, on one side, which he thought might be the very ridge whence he had overlooked the diggers. Wolfert examined it narrowly, and at length discovered three crosses similar to those on the above ring, cut deeply into the face of the rock, but nearly obliterated by moss that had grown over them. His heart leaped with joy, for he doubted not they were the private marks of the buccaneers. All now that remained was to ascertain the precise spot where the treasure lay buried, for otherwise he might dig at random in the neighborhood of the crosses, without coming upon the spoils, and he had already had enough of such profitless labor. Here, however, the old negro was perfectly at a loss, and indeed perplexed him by a variety of opinions, for his recollections were all confused. Sometimes he declared it must have been at the foot of a mulberry tree hard by; then beside a great white stone; then under a small green knoll, a short distance from the ledge of rocks, until at length Wolfert became as bewildered as himself.

The shadows of evening were now spreading themselves over the woods, and rock and tree began to mingle together. It was evidently too late to attempt anything further at present, and, indeed, Wolfert had come unprovided with implements to prosecute his researches. Satisfied, therefore, with having ascertained the place, he took note of all its landmarks, that he might recognize it again, and set out on his return homewards, resolved to prosecute this golden enterprise without delay.

The leading anxiety which had hitherto absorbed every feeling being now in some measure appeased, fancy began to wander, and to conjure up a thousand shapes and chimeras as he returned

through this haunted region. Pirates hanging in chains seemed to swing from every tree, and he almost expected to see some Spanish don, with his throat cut from ear to ear, rising slowly out of the ground, and shaking the ghost of a money bag.

Their way back lay through the desolate garden, and Wolfert's nerves had arrived at so sensitive a state that the flitting of a bird, the rustling of a leaf, or the falling of a nut was enough to startle him. As they entered the confines of the garden, they caught sight of a figure at a distance advancing slowly up one of the walks, and bending under the weight of a burden. They paused and regarded him attentively. He wore what appeared to be a woolen cap, and, still more alarming, of a most sanguinary red.

The figure moved slowly on, ascended the bank, and stopped at the very door of the sepulchral vault. Just before entering it he looked around. What was the affright of Wolfert when he recognized the grisly visage of the drowned buccaneer! He uttered an ejaculation of horror. The figure slowly raised his iron fist and shook it with a terrible menace. Wolfert did not pause to see any more, but hurried off as fast as his legs could carry him, nor was Sam slow in following at his heels, having all his ancient terrors revived. Away, then, did they scramble through bush and brake, horribly frightened at every bramble that tugged at their skirts, nor did they pause to breathe until they had blundered their way through this perilous wood, and fairly reached the highroad to the city.

Several days elapsed before Wolfert could summon courage enough to prosecute the enterprise, so much had he been dismayed by the apparition, whether living or dead, of the grisly buccaneer. In the mean time, what a conflict of mind did he suffer! He neglected all his concerns, was moody and restless all day, lost his appetite, wandered in his thoughts and words, and committed a thousand blunders. His rest was broken, and when he fell asleep the nightmare, in shape of a huge money bag, sat squatted upon his breast. He babbled about incalculable

sums, fancied himself engaged in money digging, threw the bedclothes right and left, in the idea that he was shoveling away the dirt, groped under the bed in quest of the treasure, and lugged forth, as he supposed, an inestimable pot of gold.

Dame Webber and her daughter were in despair at what they conceived a returning touch of insanity. There are two family oracles, one or other of which Dutch housewives consult in all cases of great doubt and perplexity,—the dominie and the doctor. In the present instance they repaired to the doctor. There was at that time a little dark, moldy man of medicine, famous among the old wives of the Manhattoes for his skill, not only in the healing art, but in all matters of strange and mysterious nature. His name was Dr. Knipperhausen, but he was more commonly known by the appellation of the "High German Doctor."[1] To him did the poor woman repair for counsel and assistance touching the mental vagaries of Wolfert Webber.

They found the doctor seated in his little study, clad in his dark camlet[2] robe of knowledge, with his black velvet cap, after the manner of Boerhaave,[3] Van Helmont,[4] and other medical sages, a pair of green spectacles set in black horn upon his clubbed nose, and poring over a German folio that reflected back the darkness of his physiognomy. The doctor listened to their statement of the symptoms of Wolfert's malady with profound attention, but when they came to mention his raving about buried money the little man pricked up his ears. Alas, poor women! they little knew the aid they had called in.

Dr. Knipperhausen had been half his life engaged in seeking the short cuts to fortune, in quest of which so many a long life-

[1] The same, no doubt, of whom mention is made in the history of Dolph Heyliger.

[2] A fabric made of goat's hair and silk, or wool and cotton.

[3] Hermann Boerhaave (1668–1738), a celebrated Dutch physician and philosopher.

[4] Jan Baptista Van Helmont (1577–1644), a celebrated Flemish physician and chemist.

time is wasted. He had passed some years of his youth among the Harz[1] mountains of Germany, and had derived much valuable instruction from the miners touching the mode of seeking treasure buried in the earth. He had prosecuted his studies, also, under a traveling sage who united the mysteries of medicine with magic and legerdemain. His mind, therefore, had become stored with all kinds of mystic lore; he had dabbled a little in astrology, alchemy, divination;[2] knew how to detect stolen money, and to tell where springs of water lay hidden; in a word, by the dark nature of his knowledge he had acquired the name of the "High German Doctor," which is pretty nearly equivalent to that of necromancer. The doctor had often heard rumors of treasure being buried in various parts of the island, and had long been anxious to get on the traces of it. No sooner were Wolfert's waking and sleeping vagaries confided to him than he beheld in them the confirmed symptoms of a case of money digging, and lost no time in probing it to the bottom. Wolfert had long been sorely oppressed in mind by the golden secret, and as a family physician is a kind of father confessor, he was glad of any opportunity of unburdening himself. So far from curing, the doctor caught the malady from his patient. The circumstances unfolded to him awakened all his cupidity; he had not a doubt of money being buried somewhere in the neighborhood of the mysterious crosses, and offered to join Wolfert in the search. He informed him that much secrecy and caution must be observed in enterprises of the kind; that money is only to be dug for at night, with certain forms and ceremonies and burning of drugs, the

[1] A mountain chain in northwestern Germany, between the Elbe and the Weser.

[2] Astrology, alchemy, and divination were three imaginary arts. The first pretended to judge of the influence of the stars on human affairs, and to foretell events by their positions and aspects; the second aimed to transmute the baser metals into gold, and to find a universal remedy for diseases; while the third dealt with the discovery of secret or future events by preternatural means.

repeating of mystic words, and, above all, that the seekers must first be provided with a divining rod,[1] which had the wonderful property of pointing to the very spot on the surface of the earth under which treasure lay hidden. As the doctor had given much of his mind to these matters he charged himself with all the necessary preparations, and, as the quarter of the moon was propitious, he undertook to have the divining rod ready by a certain night.

Wolfert's heart leaped with joy at having met with so learned and able a coadjutor. Everything went on secretly but swimmingly. The doctor had many consultations with his patient, and the good women of the household lauded the comforting effect of his visits. In the mean time the wonderful divining rod, that great key to nature's secrets, was duly prepared. The doctor had thumbed over all his books of knowledge for the occasion, and the black fisherman was engaged to take them in his skiff to the scene of enterprise, to work with spade and pickax in unearthing the treasure, and to freight his bark with the weighty spoils they were certain of finding.

At length the appointed night arrived for this perilous undertaking. Before Wolfert left his home he counseled his wife and daughter to go to bed, and feel no alarm if he should not return during the night. Like reasonable women, on being told not to feel alarm they fell immediately into a panic. They saw at once by his manner that something unusual was in agitation; all their fears about the unsettled state of his mind were revived with tenfold force; they hung about him, entreating him not to expose himself to the night air, but all in vain. When once Wolfert was mounted on his hobby[2] it was no easy matter to get him out of the saddle. It was a clear, starlight night when he issued out of

[1] A divining rod is a rod used by those who pretend to discover water or metals underground. It is commonly made of witch hazel, with forked branches.

[2] Hobby, or hobbyhorse, a favorite theme of thought; hence, "to mount a hobby" is to follow a favorite pursuit.

the portal of the Webber palace. He wore a large flapped hat, tied under the chin with a handkerchief of his daughter's, to secure him from the night damp, while Dame Webber threw her long red cloak about his shoulders, and fastened it round his neck.

The doctor had been no less carefully armed and accoutered by his housekeeper, the vigilant Frau Ilsy, and sallied forth in his camlet robe by way of surcoat,[1] his black velvet cap under his cocked hat, a thick clasped book under his arm, a basket of drugs and dried herbs in one hand, and in the other the miraculous rod of divination.

The great church clock struck ten as Wolfert and the doctor passed by the churchyard, and the watchman bawled in hoarse voice a long and doleful "All's well!" A deep sleep had already fallen upon this primitive little burgh; nothing disturbed this awful silence excepting now and then the bark of some profligate, night-walking dog, or the serenade of some romantic cat. It is true Wolfert fancied more than once that he heard the sound of a stealthy footfall at a distance behind them; but it might have been merely the echo of their own steps along the quiet streets. He thought also at one time that he saw a tall figure skulking after them, stopping when they stopped and moving on as they proceeded; but the dim and uncertain lamplight threw such vague gleams and shadows that this might all have been mere fancy.

They found the old fisherman waiting for them, smoking his pipe in the stern of the skiff, which was moored just in front of his little cabin. A pickax and spade were lying in the bottom of the boat, with a dark lantern, and a stone bottle of good Dutch courage,[2] in which honest Sam no doubt put even more faith than Dr. Knipperhausen in his drugs.

Thus, then, did these three worthies embark in their cockle-

1 Overcoat.

2 Dutch courage is courage that results from indulgence in Dutch gin or Hollands; here applied to the gin itself.

shell of a skiff upon this nocturnal expedition, with a wisdom and valor equaled only by the three wise men of Gotham,[1] who adventured to sea in a bowl. The tide was rising and running rapidly up the Sound. The current bore them along, almost without the aid of an oar. The profile of the town lay all in shadow. Here and there a light feebly glimmered from some sick chamber, or from the cabin window of some vessel at anchor in the stream. Not a cloud obscured the deep, starry firmament, the lights of which wavered on the surface of the placid river, and a shooting meteor, streaking its pale course in the very direction they were taking, was interpreted by the doctor into a most propitious omen.

In a little while they glided by the point of Corlear's Hook, with the rural inn which had been the scene of such night adventures. The family had retired to rest, and the house was dark and still. Wolfert felt a chill pass over him as they passed the point where the buccaneer had disappeared. He pointed it out to Dr. Knipperhausen. While regarding it they thought they saw a boat actually lurking at the very place; but the shore cast such a shadow over the border of the water that they could discern nothing distinctly. They had not proceeded far when they heard the low sounds of distant oars, as if cautiously pulled. Sam plied his oars with redoubled vigor, and knowing all the eddies and currents of the stream, soon left their followers, if such they were, far astern. In a little while they stretched across Turtle Bay[2] and Kip's Bay,[3] then shrouded themselves in the deep shadows

[1] "Three wise men of Gotham,
They went to sea in a bowl —
And if the bowl had been stronger,
My tale had been longer."
Mother Goose Melody.

Gotham was a village proverbial for the blundering simplicity of its inhabitants. At first the name referred to an English village. Irving applied it to New York City.

[2] See Note 5, p. 384.

[3] A small bay in the East River below Corlear's Hook.

of the Manhattan shore, and glided swiftly along, secure from observation. At length the negro shot his skiff into a little cove, darkly embowered by trees, and made it fast to the well-known iron ring. They now landed, and lighting the lantern gathered their various implements and proceeded slowly through the bushes. Every sound startled them, even that of their own footsteps among the dry leaves, and the hooting of a screech owl, from the shattered chimney of the neighboring ruin, made their blood run cold.

In spite of all Wolfert's caution in taking note of the landmarks, it was some time before they could find the open place among the trees, where the treasure was supposed to be buried. At length they came to the ledge of rock, and on examining its surface by the aid of the lantern, Wolfert recognized the three mystic crosses. Their hearts beat quick, for the momentous trial was at hand that was to determine their hopes.

The lantern was now held by Wolfert Webber, while the doctor produced the divining rod. It was a forked twig, one end of which was grasped firmly in each hand, while the center, forming the stem, pointed perpendicularly upwards. The doctor moved his wand about, within a certain distance of the earth, from place to place, but for some time without any effect, while Wolfert kept the light of the lantern turned full upon it, and watched it with the most breathless interest. At length the rod began slowly to turn. The doctor grasped it with greater earnestness, his hands trembling with the agitation of his mind. The wand continued to turn gradually, until at length the stem had reversed its position, and pointed perpendicularly downward, and remained pointing to one spot as fixedly as the needle to the pole.

"This is the spot!" said the doctor, in an almost inaudible tone.

Wolfert's heart was in his throat.

"Shall I dig?" said the negro, grasping the spade.

"*Pots tausend*,[1] no!" replied the little doctor hastily. He

[1] A German exclamation of anger, equivalent to the English "zounds!"

now ordered his companions to keep close by him, and to maintain the most inflexible silence; that certain precautions must be taken and ceremonies used to prevent the evil spirits which kept about buried treasure from doing them any harm. He then drew a circle about the place, enough to include the whole party. He next gathered dry twigs and leaves and made a fire, upon which he threw certain drugs and dried herbs which he had brought in his basket. A thick smoke rose, diffusing a potent odor savoring marvelously of brimstone and asafetida, which, however grateful it might be to the olfactory nerves of spirits, nearly strangled poor Wolfert, and produced a fit of coughing and wheezing that made the whole grove resound. Dr. Knipperhausen then unclasped the volume which he had brought under his arm, which was printed in red and black characters in German text. While Wolfert held the lantern, the doctor, by the aid of his spectacles, read off several forms of conjuration in Latin and German. He then ordered Sam to seize the pickax and proceed to work. The close-bound soil gave obstinate signs of not having been disturbed for many a year. After having picked his way through the surface, Sam came to a bed of sand and gravel, which he threw briskly to right and left with the spade.

"Hark!" said Wolfert, who fancied he heard a trampling among the dry leaves and a rustling through the bushes. Sam paused for a moment, and they listened. No footstep was near. The bat flitted by them in silence; a bird, roused from its roost by the light which glared up among the trees, flew circling about the flame. In the profound stillness of the woodland they could distinguish the current rippling along the rocky shore, and the distant murmuring and roaring of Hell Gate.

The negro continued his labors, and had already digged a considerable hole. The doctor stood on the edge, reading formulæ every now and then from his black-letter volume, or throwing more drugs and herbs upon the fire, while Wolfert bent anxiously over the pit, watching every stroke of the spade. Any one wit-

nessing the scene thus lighted up by fire, lantern, and the reflection of Wolfert's red mantle, might have mistaken the little doctor for some foul magician, busied in his incantations, and the grizzly-headed negro for some swart goblin obedient to his commands.

At length the spade of the fisherman struck upon something that sounded hollow. The sound vibrated to Wolfert's heart. He struck his spade again.

"'Tis a chest," said Sam.

"Full of gold, I'll warrant it!" cried Wolfert, clasping his hands with rapture.

Scarcely had he uttered the words when a sound from above caught his ear. He cast up his eyes, and lo! by the expiring light of the fire he beheld, just over the disk of the rock, what appeared to be the grim visage of the drowned buccaneer, grinning hideously down upon him.

Wolfert gave a loud cry and let fall the lantern. His panic communicated itself to his companions. The negro leaped out of the hole, the doctor dropped his book and basket, and began to pray in German. All was horror and confusion. The fire was scattered about, the lantern extinguished. In their hurry-scurry [1] they ran against and confounded one another. They fancied a legion of hobgoblins let loose upon them, and that they saw, by the fitful gleams of the scattered embers, strange figures, in red caps, gibbering and ramping around them. The doctor ran one way, the negro another, and Wolfert made for the water side. As he plunged struggling onwards through brush and brake, he heard the tread of some one in pursuit. He scrambled frantically forward. The footsteps gained upon him. He felt himself grasped by his cloak, when suddenly his pursuer was attacked in turn; a fierce fight and struggle ensued, a pistol was discharged that lit up rock and bush for a second, and showed two figures grappling together; all was then darker than ever. The contest continued, the combatants clinched each other, and panted and

[1] A swift, disorderly movement.

groaned, and rolled among the rocks. There was snarling and growling as of a cur, mingled with curses, in which Wolfert fancied he could recognize the voice of the buccaneer. He would fain have fled, but he was on the brink of a precipice, and could go no farther.

Again the parties were on their feet, again there was a tugging and struggling, as if strength alone could decide the combat, until one was precipitated from the brow of the cliff, and sent headlong into the deep stream that whirled below. Wolfert heard the plunge, and a kind of strangling, bubbling murmur, but the darkness of the night hid everything from him, and the swiftness of the current swept everything instantly out of hearing. One of the combatants was disposed of, but whether friend or foe Wolfert could not tell, nor whether they might not both be foes. He heard the survivor approach, and his terror revived. He saw, where the profile of the rocks rose against the horizon, a human form advancing. He could not be mistaken; it must be the buccaneer. Whither should he fly?—a precipice was on one side, a murderer on the other. The enemy approached—he was close at hand. Wolfert attempted to let himself down the face of the cliff. His cloak caught in a thorn that grew on the edge. He was jerked from off his feet, and held dangling in the air, half choked by the string with which his careful wife had fastened the garment around his neck. Wolfert thought his last moment was arrived; already had he committed his soul to St. Nicholas, when the string broke, and he tumbled down the bank, bumping from rock to rock and bush to bush, and leaving the red cloak fluttering like a bloody banner in the air.

It was a long while before Wolfert came to himself. When he opened his eyes, the ruddy streaks of morning were already shooting up the sky. He found himself grievously battered, and lying in the bottom of a boat. He attempted to sit up, but was too sore and stiff to move. A voice requested him in friendly accents to lie still. He turned his eyes towards the speaker; it was Dirk Waldron. He had dogged the party, at the earnest re-

quest of Dame Webber and her daughter, who, with the laudable curiosity of their sex, had pried into the secret consultations of Wolfert and the doctor. Dirk had been completely distanced in following the light skiff of the fisherman, and had just come in time to rescue the poor money digger from his pursuer.

Thus ended this perilous enterprise. The doctor and Black Sam severally found their way back to the Manhattoes, each having some dreadful tale of peril to relate. As to poor Wolfert, instead of returning in triumph, laden with bags of gold, he was borne home on a shutter, followed by a rabble-rout[1] of curious urchins. His wife and daughter saw the dismal pageant from a distance, and alarmed the neighborhood with their cries; they thought the poor man had suddenly settled the great debt of nature in one of his wayward moods. Finding him, however, still living, they had him speedily to bed, and a jury of old matrons of the neighborhood assembled to determine how he should be doctored. The whole town was in a buzz with the story of the money diggers. Many repaired to the scene of the previous night's adventures; but though they found the very place of the digging, they discovered nothing that compensated them for their trouble. Some say they found the fragments of an oaken chest, and an iron potlid, which savored strongly of hidden money, and that in the old family vault there were traces of bales and boxes; but this is all very dubious.

In fact, the secret of all this story has never to this day been discovered. Whether any treasure were ever actually buried at that place; whether, if so, it were carried off at night by those who had buried it; or whether it still remains there under the guardianship of gnomes and spirits until it shall be properly sought for, is all matter of conjecture. For my part, I incline to the latter opinion, and make no doubt that great sums lie buried, both there and in other parts of this island and its neighborhood, ever since the times of the buccaneers and the Dutch colonists; and I would earnestly recommend the search after

[1] A noisy throng.

them to such of my fellow citizens as are not engaged in any other speculations.

There were many conjectures formed, also, as to who and what was the strange man of the seas, who had domineered over the little fraternity at Corlear's Hook for a time, disappeared so strangely, and reappeared so fearfully. Some supposed him a smuggler stationed at that place to assist his comrades in landing their goods among the rocky coves of the island. Others, that he was one of the ancient comrades of Kidd or Bradish,[1] returned to convey away treasures formerly hidden in the vicinity. The only circumstance that throws anything like a vague light on this mysterious matter is a report which prevailed of a strange, foreign-built shallop, with much the look of a picaroon,[2] having been seen hovering about the Sound for several days without landing or reporting herself, though boats were seen going to and from her at night; and that she was seen standing out of the mouth of the harbor, in the gray of the dawn, after the catastrophe of the money diggers.

I must not omit to mention another report, also, which I confess is rather apocryphal, of the buccaneer who is supposed to have been drowned, being seen before daybreak, with a lantern in his hand, seated astride of his great sea chest, and sailing through Hell Gate, which just then began to roar and bellow with redoubled fury.

While all the gossip world was thus filled with talk and rumor, poor Wolfert lay sick and sorrowfully in his bed, bruised in body and sorely beaten down in mind. His wife and daughter did all they could to bind up his wounds, both corporal and spiritual. The good old dame never stirred from his bedside, where she sat knitting from morning till night, while his daughter busied herself about him with the fondest care. Nor did they lack assistance from abroad. Whatever may be said of the desertion of friends in distress, they had no complaint of the kind to make. Not an old wife of the neighborhood but abandoned her work to crowd

[1] See Note 4, p. 384. [2] A piratical vessel.

to the mansion of Wolfert Webber, to inquire after his health and the particulars of his story. Not one came, moreover, without her little pipkin of pennyroyal, sage, balm, or other herb tea, delighted at an opportunity of signalizing her kindness and her doctorship. What drenchings did not the poor Wolfert undergo, and all in vain! It was a moving sight to behold him wasting away day by day, growing thinner and thinner and ghastlier and ghastlier, and staring with rueful visage from under an old patchwork counterpane, upon the jury of matrons kindly assembled to sigh and groan and look unhappy around him.

Dirk Waldron was the only being that seemed to shed a ray of sunshine into this house of mourning. He came in with cheery look and manly spirit, and tried to reanimate the expiring heart of the poor money digger, but it was all in vain. Wolfert was completely done over.[1] If anything was wanting to complete his despair, it was a notice, served upon him in the midst of his distress, that the corporation was about to run a new street through the very center of his cabbage garden. He now saw nothing before him but poverty and ruin; his last reliance, the garden of his forefathers, was to be laid waste, and what then was to become of his poor wife and child?

His eyes filled with tears as they followed the dutiful Amy out of the room one morning. Dirk Waldron was seated beside him; Wolfert grasped his hand, pointed after his daughter, and for the first time since his illness broke the silence he had maintained.

"I am going!" said he, shaking his head feebly, "and when I am gone, my poor daughter"—

"Leave her to me, father!" said Dirk manfully; "I'll take care of her!"

Wolfert looked up in the face of the cheery, strapping youngster, and saw there was none better able to take care of a woman.

"Enough," said he, "she is yours! And now fetch me a lawyer—let me make my will and die."

The lawyer was brought,—a dapper, bustling, roundheaded

[1] Exhausted.

little man, Roorback (or Rollebuck, as it was pronounced) by name. At the sight of him the women broke into loud lamentations, for they looked upon the signing of a will as the signing of a death warrant. Wolfert made a feeble motion for them to be silent. Poor Amy buried her face and her grief in the bed curtain. Dame Webber resumed her knitting to hide her distress, which betrayed itself, however, in a pellucid tear, which trickled silently down, and hung at the end of her peaked nose; while the cat, the only unconcerned member of the family, played with the good dame's ball of worsted as it rolled about the floor.

Wolfert lay on his back, his nightcap drawn over his forehead, his eyes closed, his whole visage the picture of death. He begged the lawyer to be brief, for he felt his end approaching, and that he had no time to lose. The lawyer nibbed[1] his pen, spread out his paper, and prepared to write.

"I give and bequeath," said Wolfert faintly, "my small farm"—

"What! all?" exclaimed the lawyer.

Wolfert half opened his eyes and looked upon the lawyer.

"Yes, all," said he.

"What! all that great patch of land with cabbages and sunflowers, which the corporation is just going to run a main street through?"

"The same," said Wolfert, with a heavy sigh, and sinking back upon his pillow.

"I wish him joy that inherits it!" said the little lawyer, chuckling and rubbing his hands involuntarily.

"What do you mean?" said Wolfert, again opening his eyes.

"That he'll be one of the richest men in the place," cried little Rollebuck.

The expiring Wolfert seemed to step back from the threshold of existence; his eyes again lighted up; he raised himself in his

[1] In Irving's time, quills were made into pens by pointing or "nibbing" their ends.

bed, shoved back his red worsted nightcap, and stared broadly at the lawyer.

"You don't say so!" exclaimed he.

"Faith but I do!" rejoined the other. "Why, when that great field and that huge meadow come to be laid out in streets and cut up into snug building lots, — why, whoever owns it need not pull off his hat to the patroon!"[1]

"Say you so?" cried Wolfert, half thrusting one leg out of bed; "why, then, I think I'll not make my will yet."

To the surprise of everybody the dying man actually recovered. The vital spark, which had glimmered faintly in the socket, received fresh fuel from the oil of gladness which the little lawyer poured into his soul. It once more burned up into a flame.

Give physic to the heart, ye who would revive the body of a spirit-broken man! In a few days Wolfert left his room; in a few days more his table was covered with deeds, plans of streets and building lots. Little Rollebuck was constantly with him, his right hand man and adviser, and instead of making his will assisted in the more agreeable task of making his fortune. In fact Wolfert Webber was one of those worthy Dutch burghers of the Manhattoes whose fortunes have been made, in a manner, in spite of themselves; who have tenaciously held on to their hereditary acres, raising turnips and cabbages about the skirts of the city, hardly able to make both ends meet, until the corporation has cruelly driven streets through their abodes, and they have suddenly awakened out of their lethargy, and, to their astonishment, found themselves rich men.

Before many months had elapsed a great, bustling street passed through the very center of the Webber garden, just where Wolfert had dreamed of finding a treasure. His golden dream was accomplished; he did, indeed, find an unlooked-for source of wealth, for, when his paternal lands were distributed into building lots and rented out to safe tenants, instead of producing a paltry crop of cabbages they returned him an abundant crop of

[1] See Note 2, p. 375.

rent, insomuch that on quarter day it was a goodly sight to see his tenants knocking at the door from morning till night, each with a little round-bellied bag of money, a golden produce of the soil.

The ancient mansion of his forefathers was still kept up, but, instead of being a little yellow-fronted Dutch house in a garden, it now stood boldly in the midst of a street, the grand home of the neighborhood; for Wolfert enlarged it with a wing on each side, and a cupola or tea room on top, where he might climb up and smoke his pipe in hot weather, and in the course of time the whole mansion was overrun by the chubby-faced progeny of Amy Webber and Dirk Waldron.

As Wolfert waxed old and rich and corpulent he also set up a great gingerbread-colored carriage, drawn by a pair of black Flanders mares with tails that swept the ground; and to commemorate the origin of his greatness he had for his crest a full-blown cabbage painted on the panels, with the pithy motto, ALLES KOPF, that is to say, ALL HEAD, meaning thereby that he had risen by sheer head work.

To fill the measure of his greatness, in the fullness of time the renowned Ramm Rapelye slept with his fathers, and Wolfert Webber succeeded to the leather-bottomed armchair in the inn parlor at Corlear's Hook; where he long reigned, greatly honored and respected, insomuch that he was never known to tell a story without its being believed, nor to utter a joke without its being laughed at.

NOTES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY.

I. IRVING AS A WRITER.

As a writer, Irving's humor and sentiment chiefly endear him to us. The pure fun of his *Legend of Sleepy Hollow* or Wolfert Webber's money digging vagaries, the thinly veiled raillery of the *Knickerbocker History of New York*, the gentle irony of *Buckthorne and his Friends*, and other parts of *Tales of a Traveler*, the pathos and humor of *Rip Van Winkle*, the glowing romance and witchery of *Alhambra*, more than his lives and histories, give us the joy of his fellowship. As a literary man, his interests lay in the past. Living in the midst of the most strenuous struggles of the century, antislavery agitation at home, social and religious revolutions everywhere, due to great industrial expansion and to startling scientific and economic theories and discoveries, astounding governmental reforms giving greater political freedom to the masses, humanitarian and philosophic movements of every kind, which changed the course of life for men like Wordsworth, Shelley, Newman, and Matthew Arnold, left him untouched. His aloofness from the active, pulsating, problem-agitated world of his day, is doubly remarkable in a man who loved society and was its idol, who was intensely interested in real men and women, and who through his vocation was constantly thrown with the very people who were struggling with doubts and unutterable anxieties. But he was preëminently a literary man, the observer and describer, who reviewed with poetic fervor the past and its legends, romance, traditions of historic men and beautiful women, memories of the goodness, the sorrows, and the joys of its humanity. He was naturally a retrospective man. His was not a mind that readily grasped political questions and philosophies of the day, for his powers lay in the province of feeling rather than thought and theory. He was truly

cosmopolitan, a citizen of the world. The romance of Saracen Spain, and the charms of passionate Italy, of quaint, rural England, and of society everywhere were as an open book to him. Yet, as much as his apparent aloofness, absorption in mere romance and history, may seem to deny, he was very much interested in people, in humanity. He was wrapped up in his little family of nieces, his brothers, and sisters, and throughout America and Europe by innumerable ties of friendship and love, he was bound to hundreds of men and women of every station of life. In fact, his companionability, his social impulse, his genial tender sympathy for all conditions of men, is one of the chief charms of his books.

II. IRVING'S STYLE.

Not the least of his charms, however, is his style. He was an artist. As his education was desultory and as his reading, though extensive, was undertaken with no definite purpose, it is hard for critics to account for his remarkable sense of proportion and his refined taste. He seemed always to have had the sensibility of an artist. His acute observation of men and nature are only equaled by his vivid portrayal of character and picturesque descriptions. His method is gentle and unobtrusive. Being a man of refined feeling and delicate sensibilities, rather than a man of trenchant thought, he puts us in possession of his idea, portrait, or scene by a tactful succession of sympathetic touches. He went about it as naturally as he looked into human faces to read sympathetically the story of love, joy, or anguish, or into the world of nature to revel in its sunsets, long stretches of landscape, mountains, waters, or the ruins of an ancient civilization beautified in nature's own way, to all of which he was extremely responsive. In his choice of words and phrases, while not strikingly precise and thought-provoking, he is happy, spontaneous, and clear; and his flow of sentences is not unmusical. His clearness is notable, though unlike the simplicity of Bunyan or Franklin, and is, like his own model in the Spectator papers, a safe guide for young writers. There hangs about all he ever wrote the charm of elegance, finish, refined taste in word and thought, in phrase and fancy, in conception and execution, that is indescribable because it is the winning personality of the artist and the man. After all, style is the man.

III. IRVING AND THE MODERN SHORT-STORY.

It is exceedingly interesting to note Irving's contribution to the development of the short-story and the differences between his literary aim and that of Poe, who defined the short-story for the world. In this connection, I quote from the introduction of Brander Matthews' *Short-Story*. "In the United States, Hawthorne and Poe had a predecessor in Irving, whose delightful tales lack only a more vigorous restraint to be accepted as the earliest models of the short-story. In fact, it is only when we draw up a narrowly rigid definition of the form that we are forced to exclude Irving from the list of its originators. What Irving did not seek to bestow on his charming fantasies was the essential compression, the swift and straightforward movement, the unwillingness to linger by the way.

"In fact, to linger by the way was exactly what Irving proposed to himself as a principle. 'For my part,' he wrote to a friend, 'I consider a story merely as a frame on which to sketch the materials; it is the play of thought, and sentiment, and language, the weaving in of characters, lightly, yet expressively delineated; the familiar and beautiful exhibition of scenes in common life; and the half-concealed vein of humor that is often playing through the whole,—these are among what I aim at, and upon which I felicitate myself in proportion as I think I succeed.' In this declaration Irving reveals the reason why he is to be considered as a true heir of the eighteenth-century essayists. The *Sketch-Book* is the direct descendant of the *Spectator;* and in *Rip Van Winkle* and in the *Specter Bridegroom* and in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* we must see the connecting link between the brief tale as it had been generally essayed in the eighteenth century and the short-story as it was to be perfected in the nineteenth. While Irving's manner is the discursive manner of the essayist, his material is very much what the later writers of the short-story were glad to deal with.

"Beyond all question, Irving had freshness, inventiveness, fantasy —all invaluable gifts for the short-story; but he did not strive for the implacable unity and swift compactness which we now demand and which we find frequently in Hawthorne and always in Poe."

IV. TALES OF A TRAVELER.

The *Tales of a Traveler* are in one sense especially characteristic of Irving, as he was essentially a traveler. They are fragments picked up from here, there, and everywhere, molded into a perfect whole by the art of a genius. The characters are wonderfully true to life, and, considering their wide range and diversity, we cannot but marvel at the author's keen insight and penetration. He himself considered these tales as a part of his best work, an opinion which is apt to surprise us if we judge from the plots alone, for they certainly lack the freshness and originality of those in the *Sketch-Book*. But these plots were undoubtedly written to meet what the author felt to be a popular demand. In *Buckthorne* the aspiring author is told that "poetry is a mere drug; tales of pirates, robbers, and bloody Turks might answer tolerably well, but then they must come from some established, well-known name, or the public would not look at them." Irving was the more willing to accede to this demand because he considered the plot as of minor importance.

Viewed in the light of his expressed purpose, these tales will not be found wanting, for the faithful delineation of the characters, the easy, flowing style, the beautiful descriptions of scenery, and the rare touches of humor and pathos, are equal to anything the author has produced. The stories are divided into four parts, each of which represents a distinct type of plot. Each part is composed of a number of stories, distinct in themselves, but having a connecting link which binds them together somewhat on the plan of the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*.

Part I, or *Strange Stories by a Nervous Gentleman*, comprises tales of a ghostly character. The connecting link in this part is *Hunting Dinner*. The guests at this dinner, detained overnight by the inclemency of the weather, tax the accommodations of the house to the utmost, so that every odd corner is put into service. This suggests the haunted chamber, and leads to the narration of a number of queer and ghostly stories by the guests assembled round the fireside. On retiring to their respective apartments, one of them meets with an unenviable experience with a picture. This calls for explanations from the host, and furnishes the material for the remaining stories.

Irving does not spoil his tales by attempting to directly explain

away the mystery which envelops them; but there is in each some element which might escape the careless reader, but which is in itself the full explanation. Thus in one case, the hero, having eaten heavily, retires to rest with a mind excited by the stories he has heard. The strange dance of the furniture is accounted for by the fact that the bold dragoon "was apt to make blunders in his travels about inns at night, which it would have puzzled him sadly to account for in the morning."

In the story of *The German Student*, who went mad as the result of his horrible experience, our doubts are set at rest by the inquisitive gentleman, "who never seemed satisfied with the whole of a story; never laughed when others laughed, but always put the joke to the question; never could enjoy the kernel of the nut, but pestered himself to get more out of the shell." " 'And is this really a fact?' said the inquisitive gentleman. 'A fact not to be doubted,' replied the other. 'I had it from the best authority. The student told it me himself. I saw him in a madhouse in Paris!' "

In Part II, *Buckthorne and his Friends*, Irving introduces us to literary life as he had observed it in London. *Buckthorne* was written as a part of *Bracebridge Hall*, but Irving's friends advised him to retain it as the groundwork of a novel, and to supply something else in its place. This he did; but later he abandoned the project of a novel, and published the tale as at first conceived, with a few additional passages introduced into Buckthorne's life. The *Literary Dinner*, curious as it is, had a personal foundation. "He has given the description of the booksellers' dinner," says Thomas Moore, "so exactly like what I told him of one of the Longmans' (the carving partner, the partner to laugh at the popular author's jokes, the twelve-edition writers treated to claret, etc.), that I very much fear my friends in Paternoster Row will know themselves in the picture." Subsequently Moore gave the author an opportunity to improve the picture by personal observation. The encounter of the poor-devil author with the man in green is one of the most humorous incidents in the book; and the strolling manager who was to be brought out as a theatrical wonder, with his cracked voice as the chief attraction, and all other faults attributed to the irregularities of genius, enlists our sympathy to such an extent that we grieve with him at the downfall of his hopes.

Part III comprises *The Italian Banditti*. The tales are developed on the same plan as those in Part I. The travelers, detained over night at an inn in a region alive with the rumors of highway robberies, pass their time by relating incidents of robberies that have come within their experience. On resuming their journey, they themselves have an encounter, with which these stories end. Here we find some splendid character portraits,—the little antiquary, with his anxiety about his treatise on the Pelasgian cities; the pompous English alderman; the self-conscious robber-chieftain who has missed his vocation of philanthropy; the phlegmatic Englishman; and the indignant landlord who, baffled in his attempt to relate the adventure of the Popkins family, retires from the room exclaiming, "Popkin–Popkin–Popkin–pop–pop–pop."

Part IV, *The Money Diggers*, comprises legends of pirates and the searches after their buried wealth. Like *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, these tales have our own country for background, and its beauties gain an added charm through the delicate touches of Irving's pen. The stories, like others in the book, are commonplace enough; but while idly following the fortunes of Wolfert Webber, we pick up by the way such gems as the following: "In the meantime, the seasons gradually rolled on. The little frogs which had piped in the meadows in early spring croaked as bullfrogs during the summer heats, and then sank into silence. The peach tree budded, blossomed, and bore its fruit. The swallows and martins came, twittered about the roof, built their nests, reared their young, held their congress along the eaves, and then winged their flight in search of another spring. The caterpillar spun its winding sheet, dangled in it from the great buttonwood tree before the house, turned into a moth, fluttered with the last sunshine of summer, and disappeared; and finally the leaves of the buttonwood tree turned yellow, then brown, then rustled one by one to the ground, and whirling about in little eddies of wind and dust, whispered that winter was at hand."

There was a time, no doubt, in the history of our country, when the reading of tales like these, with promises of sudden wealth, was fraught with a certain danger; but now we can confidently place them in the hands of our children and let them dream a while, if they will, secure in the thought that, as they grow older and breathe the practical atmosphere which to-day pervades everything, they will

realize that the only treasures still buried are such as earnest work and study alone can unearth, and that the signposts of these hidden treasures direct to the paths of truth and virtue and industry.

V. SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS.

The Life of Irving.

(a) Give some idea of the personality of Irving. What facts show that he was a lovable man? Name some of his friends and admirers. Why is the year of his birth significant in American history? Name some of his youthful pleasures and habits. What did he read? Did the boy show any fondness for external nature? How? In what sense was he an idler. Why was he allowed to take fishing and hunting excursions and to do extensive visiting when ordinarily he should have been in college or at work? In what way was he preparing himself for his future profession?

(b) What was the object of his first European trip? How long did he stay and how did he spend the time? What kind of life did he lead when he returned to New York? What kind of organization was the "Nine Worthies"? What literary venture was made about this time? Did it succeed? Had he written before? When? What qualities did his early compositions exhibit? What was the *Knickerbocker History of New York?* Did it succeed? By what sorrow was work on this book interrupted?

(c) What was the occasion of Irving's second visit to England? Was Irving a good business man? What kinds of business had he tried before the second visit to England? How did he finally make up his mind to follow a literary career? What book was soon published? How did the public receive it? Did it show the influence of his travels? Point out some of the writer's characteristics. What books soon followed the *Sketch-Book?* Did he express an opinion on the *Tales of a Traveler?* What?

(d) Why did he go to Spain? Give an account of his travels just before going to Spain. What did he think of all his work before this time? What books came out within the first ten years after he went to Spain? In which does the special genius of Irving show itself best? What does Warner say of his creative power? Who were his friends

in Spain? What honor came from his own country that brought his residence in Spain to an end? How was he received in England?

(e) How long was this visit to Europe? Was Irving fond of America? How was he received on his return home? What honors did he decline? Why? Was he very much interested in political affairs? Is this an example of his aloofness from the problems and practical affairs of his time? What traveling did he do now? What books came as a result of the new stimulus? How many of his books can you group around his first travels in America, his visit to Spain, his visit to England and other European countries, and his last great American tour? Was Irving very much attached to his home and family?

(f) What signal honor came at last that he felt bound to accept? How did he acquit himself? Why were his services particularly desirable at this time? What literary activities occupied the rest of his life?

Divide the life of Irving into five or six periods and note the activities of each, the travels, the books written, the special interest of each.

The Writer and His Art.

Illustrate as many of Irving's characteristics as a writer as you can from *Tales of a Traveler*. Illustrate his characteristic qualities of style. What is Irving's contribution to the development of the short-story? What was his aim in writing his sketches or stories? How does it differ from that of Poe?

The great group of romantic poets of England (Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, and Shelley) was in its ascendancy during Irving's time. Some of the things which characterized these and other less important writers under the influence of the romantic spirit were an enthusiastic love of external nature; a passionate devotion to liberty, religious, social, and civil; an intense sympathy for human weakness and suffering; an engaging interest in stories and peoples of the past—especially the tales of chivalric deeds and heroic love of the Middle Ages—; and a curious love of the odd, wild, whimsical, mysterious, and romantic in man and in nature past and present. Do you find the presence or absence of any of these qualities conspicuous in Irving? Illustrate each point.

Discuss Irving's ability as a story writer. Is he better at description than at narration? Illustrate your point.

Discuss Irving's humor. Is it sympathetic or sarcastic? Kindly or biting? Is this characteristic of Irving's nature?

Write an appreciation of Irving showing why he interests you.

Tales of a Traveler—General.

Note the machinery of each group of stories. Are the devices to secure unity the same in all groups? Are the tales within tales ever confusing? Do all the stories contribute to one general effect, heightening the impression of the last story? What humorous statement is made in the preface about the teaching of morals in stories? In what does Irving's humor consist? Is it inherent in the stories (what the characters do and say or what happens to them), in the attitude of the author to his characters, in the incongruous suggestions of his diction and imagery, in exaggeration? Is his raillery sarcastic? sympathetic? ever indelicate? Point out passages illustrating Irving's simple, easy flowing, elegant style.

Part I.

What is the function of *The Hunting Dinner?* Is the setting good for the stories that follow? Is the characterization skillful or merely humorous? In *The Adventures of My Uncle*, how are we led to expect the shadowy visitor? Outline the plot. Is the story complete? Compare with one of Poe's stories in regard to form and effectiveness. In *The Adventures of My Aunt*, what differences from the last story does the narrator call attention to? Is this story better than the last? Does the "Bold Dragoon" resemble his grandson? How? Is the story in keeping with the character of the dragoon? Point out some effective description. Who tells of *The Adventure of the German Student?* Does he try to hoax? Is the background appropriate? Is there any humor here? Who relates the tales of Part I? Is the adventure with the picture characteristic? Show how his susceptible imagination was prepared for the disquieting effect of the picture. Do we learn in *The Adventure of the Mysterious Stranger* anything new about the baronet? What is the effect of the frequent mention of the stranger's backward apprehensive glance? Is the *Story of the Young Italian* well constructed? Is there any affectation in the character of the Italian? Is the style ornate? Can Irving skillfully portray romantic love, vehement emotion, overpowering pathos?

Part II.

Note the humor of this part. What facts are given in regard to London authors? Do you find any literary criticism or comment on the literary taste and fashions of the times? What? Are they Irving's own? What are some good humorous hits in *A Literary Dinner?* Contrast with *The Club of Queer Fellows*. How does Irving prepare us for the story of *The Poor-Devil Author?* Are his successive misfortunes too numerous for the best effect? Is there any moral here? Compare the plot with the best preceding story. Point out examples of irony. What is the author's attitude to Dribble? Does Buckthorne's eulogy of the lark ring true? How many lines of interest are here? Do the surprises in connection with Buckthorne's cousin and Sacharissa seem natural? What interesting comments on school life are made? Is the frequent reference to the poetical temperament amusing? What can you say of the unity of the story? Can Irving reveal effectively the springs of character, move deep feeling, cast over natural scenes the halo of imaginative beauty?

Part III.

How many lines of interest are opened? Follow them separately to the end. The blustering, dashing, sceptical Englishman and the garrulous landlord are excellent portraits. Point out two or three of the best descriptions of scenes and of people and show how they add to the effectiveness of the story. Note the humor of *The Adventure of the Little Antiquary*, and compare with the rest of this part. In *The Belated Travelers*, is the constraint of the Polonaise sufficiently accounted for? Is the device by which the Count and his daughter are saved a good one? Characterize the princess. What is the effect of this story on the young Venetian? Point out the method of suspense used in connection with the story of the Popkins family. Is it effective? What characteristics of these English folk are laughed at? Is the humor in these stories as good as it is in the other groups? Are these stories as effective? Why? What are some of the characteristics of the painter? What do you think of the confessions of the two robbers? What is the effect of the comment of the author after the last? How does the young Venetian's opinion of the Eng-

lishman change? What idea do you get of Italian character? of bandits?

Part IV.

What is the purpose of the description of Hell Gate? of the sketch of Captain Kidd? What incident called forth the story of *The Devil and Tom Walker?* Point out the humorous hints of the authenticity of these tales. Describe the change that comes over Wolfert Webber on hearing the tales of buried money. Do you think Irving has anywhere sacrificed the appearance of reality for humor? Do you find here any characters or places that remind you of the story of Rip Van Winkle? What? Do you find any differences between these and the foregoing tales in style or manner of treatment? Who is supposed to tell these? Point out two or three excellent bits of description. Point out descriptions of weather that contribute effectively to the strange impression of the story. What is the effect of the conversation following the story of the negro? Characterize the mysterious stranger. Why is he introduced? Point out the lines of interest in this part. Does the writer ever seem to be hoaxing the reader?

VI. APPRECIATIONS OF IRVING.

"That amiable character which makes itself so manifest in the writings of Irving, was seen in all his daily actions. He was ever ready to do kind offices, tender of the feelings of others, carefully just, but ever leaning to the merciful side of justice, averse from strife, and so modest that the world never ceased to wonder how it should have happened that one so much praised should have gained so little assurance. He envied no man's success, he sought to detract from no man's merit, but he was acutely sensitive both to praise and to blame. He thought so little of himself that he could never comprehend why it was that he should be the object of curiosity or reverence."—*William Cullen Bryant.*

"Irving's literature, walk around it and measure it by whatever critical instrument you will, is a beneficent literature. The author loved good women and little children and a pure life; he had faith in his fellow men, a kindly sympathy with the lowest, without any sub-

servience to the highest; he retained a belief in the possibility of chivalrous actions, and did not care to envelop them in a cynical suspicion; he was an author still capable of an enthusiasm. His books are wholesome, full of sweetness and charm, of humor without any sting, of amusement without any stain."—*Charles Dudley Warner.*

"Forty years ago, upon a pleasant afternoon, you might have seen tripping with an elastic step along Broadway, in New York, a figure which even then would have been called quaint. It was a man of about sixty-six or sixty-seven years old, of a rather solid frame, wearing a Talma, as a short cloak of the time was called, that hung from the shoulders, and low shoes, neatly tied, which were observable at a time when boots were generally worn. The head was slightly declined to one side, the face was smoothly shaven, and the eyes twinkled with kindly humor and shrewdness. There was a chirping, cheery, old-school air in the whole appearance, an undeniable Dutch aspect, which, in the streets of New Amsterdam, irresistibly recalled Diedrich Knickerbocker. The observer might easily have supposed that he saw some later descendant of the renowned Wouter Van Twiller refined into a nineteenth century gentleman. The occasional start of interest as the figure was recognized by some one in the passing throng, the respectful bow, and the sudden turn to scan him more closely, indicated that he was not unknown. Indeed, he was the American of his time universally known. This modest and kindly man was the creator of Diedrich Knickerbocker and Rip Van Winkle. He was the father of our literature; and at that time its patriarch. He was Washington Irving."—*George William Curtis.*

"The first ambassador whom the New World of Letters sent to the Old. He was born almost with the republic; the *pater patriæ* had laid his hand on the child's head. He bore Washington's name; he came amongst us bringing the kindest sympathy, the most artless, smiling good will. His new country (which some people here might be disposed to regard rather superciliously) could send us, as he showed in his person, a gentleman, who, though himself born in no very high sphere, was most finished, polished, easy, witty, quiet; and socially, the equal of the most refined Europeans. If Irving's welcome in England was a kind one, was it not also gratefully remem-

bered? If he ate our salt, did he not pay us with a thoughtful heart? Who can calculate the amount of friendliness and good feeling for our country which this writer's generous and untiring regard for us disseminated in his own? His books are read by millions of his countrymen, whom he has taught to love England and why to love her. Was Irving not good, and, of his works, was not his life the best part? In his family, gentle, generous, good-humored, affectionate, self-denying; in society, a delightful example of complete gentlemanhood; quite unspoiled by prosperity; never obsequious to the great (or, worse still, to the base and mean, as some public men are forced to be in his and other countries); eager to acknowledge every contemporary's merit; always kind and affable to the young members of his calling; in his professional bargains and mercantile dealings delicately honest and grateful; one of the most charming masters of our lighter literature; the constant friend to us and our nation; to men of letters doubly dear, not for his wit and genius merely, but as an example of goodness, probity, and pure life."—*William Makepeace Thackeray.*

"To a true poet-heart add the fun of Dick Steele,
Throw in all of Addison, *minus* the chill,
With the whole of that partnership's stock and good-will,
Mix well, and while stirring, hum o'er, as a spell,
The fine *old* English Gentleman, simmer it well,
Sweeten just to your own private liking, then strain,
That only the finest and clearest remain,
Let it stand out of doors till a soul it receives
From the warm lazy sun loitering down through green leaves,
And you'll find a choice nature, not wholly deserving
A name either English or Yankee—just Irving."

—*James Russell Lowell.*

"Chaucer I fancied had been dead
Some centuries, some four or five;
By fancy I have been misled
Like many; he is yet alive.
'The Widow's Ordeal' who beside
Could thus relate? Yes, there is one,
He bears beyond the Atlantic wide
The glorious name of Washington." —*Walter Savage Landor.*

"His English style, so pure, so delicate, so clear, so rhythmical,—the natural expression of a pure, beautiful, and harmonious soul, exquisitely attuned to all that is lovely, graceful, and noble in nature and life,—embodying a character painted in immortal colors by the genius of Plato; his imagination, so gentle, and so powerful, that brightened everything it touched, as the genial sunshine kindles the landscape into beauty; his ready and delightful wit and humor, that exhilarated us, not with tumultuous laughter, except, perhaps, in those sallies of the sportive genius of his youth. But with a serene gladness of spirit; his pathos, so tender, so true, so full of feeling for every form of sorrow, toned with a sweet, lingering sadness from the unforgotten sorrow of his early days,—what a combination of attractive qualities, adorning his personal character and clothing his literary works with an unexpressible charm!"—*C. C. Felton.*

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